

FDA-approved Medication Guide

MEDICATION GUIDE

RIBASPHERE[®] (Rīb-ă-sphere)

(ribavirin, USP)

Tablets

Read this Medication Guide carefully before you start taking Ribasphere (ribavirin, USP) and read the Medication Guide each time you get more Ribasphere (ribavirin, USP). There may be new information. This information does not take the place of talking to your healthcare provider about your medical condition or your treatment.

Also read the Medication Guide for PEGASYS¹ (peginterferon alfa-2a).

What is the most important information I should know about Ribasphere (ribavirin, USP)?

- 1. You should not take Ribasphere (ribavirin, USP) alone to treat chronic hepatitis C infection.** Ribasphere (ribavirin, USP) should be used with peginterferon alfa-2a to treat chronic hepatitis C infection.
 - 2. Ribasphere (ribavirin, USP) may cause you to have a blood problem (hemolytic anemia) that can worsen any heart problems you have, and cause you to have a heart attack or die.** Tell your healthcare provider if you have ever had any heart problems. Ribasphere (ribavirin, USP) may not be right for you. If you have chest pain while you take Ribasphere (ribavirin, USP), get emergency medical attention right away.
 - 3. Ribasphere (ribavirin, USP) may cause birth defects or death of your unborn baby.** If you are pregnant or your sexual partner is pregnant, do not take Ribasphere (ribavirin, USP). You or your sexual partner should not become pregnant while you take Ribasphere (ribavirin, USP) and for 6 months after treatment is over. You must use two forms of birth control when you take Ribasphere (ribavirin, USP) and for the 6 months after treatment.
- Females must have a pregnancy test before starting Ribasphere (ribavirin, USP), every month while treated with Ribasphere (ribavirin, USP), and every month for the 6 months after treatment with Ribasphere (ribavirin, USP).
 - If you or your female sexual partner becomes pregnant** while taking Ribasphere (ribavirin, USP) or within 6 months after you stop taking Ribasphere (ribavirin, USP), tell your healthcare provider right away. You or your healthcare provider should contact the **Ribavirin Pregnancy Registry by calling 1-800-593-2214**. The Ribavirin Pregnancy Registry collects information about what happens to mothers and their babies if the mother takes Ribasphere (ribavirin, USP) while she is pregnant.

What is Ribasphere (ribavirin, USP)?

Ribasphere (ribavirin, USP) is a medicine used with another medicine called peginterferon alfa-2a to treat chronic (lasting a long time) hepatitis C infection in people whose liver still works normally, and who have not been treated before with a medicine called an interferon alpha. It is not known if Ribasphere (ribavirin, USP) is safe and will work in children under 18 years of age.

Who should not take Ribasphere (ribavirin, USP)?

See “What is the most important information I should know about Ribasphere (ribavirin, USP)?”

Do not take Ribasphere (ribavirin, USP) if you:

- **have certain types of hepatitis** caused by your immune system attacking your liver (autoimmune hepatitis)
- **have certain blood disorders, such as thalassemia major or sickle-cell anemia (hemoglobinopathies)**
- **have severe kidney disease**
- **take didanosine (Videx or Videx EC)**

Talk to your healthcare provider before starting treatment with Ribasphere (ribavirin, USP) if you have any of these medical conditions.

What should I tell my healthcare provider before taking Ribasphere (ribavirin, USP)?

Before you take Ribasphere (ribavirin, USP), tell your healthcare provider if you have or have had:

- **treatment for hepatitis C that did not work for you**
- **serious allergic reactions to Ribasphere (ribavirin, USP) or to any of the ingredients in Ribasphere (ribavirin, USP).** See the end of this Medication Guide for a list of ingredients.
- **breathing problems.** Ribasphere (ribavirin, USP) may cause or worsen your breathing problems you already have.
- **vision problems.** Ribasphere (ribavirin, USP) may cause eye problems or worsen eye problems you already have. You should have an eye exam before you start treatment with Ribasphere (ribavirin, USP).
- **certain blood disorders such as anemia**
- **high blood pressure, heart problems or have had a heart attack.** Your healthcare provider should test your blood and heart before you start treatment with Ribasphere (ribavirin, USP).
- **thyroid problems**
- **diabetes.** Ribasphere (ribavirin, USP) and peginterferon alfa-2a combination therapy may make your diabetes worse or harder to treat.
- **liver problems other than hepatitis C virus infection**
- **human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) or other immunity problems**
- **mental health problems, including depression or thoughts of suicide**
- **kidney problems**
- **an organ transplant**
- **drug addiction or abuse**
- **infection with hepatitis B virus**
- **any other medical condition**
- **are breast feeding.** It is not known if Ribasphere (ribavirin, USP) passes into your breast milk. You and your healthcare provider should decide if you will take Ribasphere (ribavirin, USP) or breast-feed.

Tell your healthcare provider about all the medicines you take, including prescription and non-prescription medicines, vitamins and herbal supplements. Some medicines can cause serious side effects if taken while you also take Ribasphere (ribavirin, USP). Some medicines may affect how Ribasphere (ribavirin, USP) works or Ribasphere (ribavirin, USP) may affect how your other medicines work.

Especially tell your healthcare provider if you take any medicines to treat HIV, including didanosine (Videx or Videx EC), or if you take azathioprine (Imuran^{®2} or Azasan).

Know the medicines you take. Keep a list of them to show your healthcare provider or pharmacist when you get a new medicine.

How should I take Ribasphere (ribavirin, USP)?

- Take Ribasphere (ribavirin, USP) exactly as your healthcare provider tells you. Your healthcare provider will tell you how much Ribasphere (ribavirin, USP) to take and when to take it.
- Take Ribasphere (ribavirin, USP) with food.
- If you miss a dose of Ribasphere (ribavirin, USP), take the missed dose as soon as possible during the same day. Do not double the next dose. If you have questions about what to do, call your healthcare provider.
- If you take too much Ribasphere (ribavirin, USP), call your healthcare provider or local Poison Control Center right away, or go to the nearest hospital emergency room right away.
- Your healthcare provider should do blood tests before you start treatment with Ribasphere (ribavirin, USP), at weeks 2 and 4 of treatment, and then as needed to see how well you are tolerating treatment and to check for side effects. Your healthcare provider may change your dose of Ribasphere (ribavirin, USP) based on blood test results or side effects you may have.
- If you have heart problems, your healthcare provider should check your heart by doing an electrocardiogram before you start treatment with Ribasphere (ribavirin, USP), and if needed during treatment.

What should I avoid while taking Ribasphere (ribavirin, USP)?

- **Ribasphere (ribavirin, USP) can make you feel tired, dizzy, or confused. You should not drive or operate machinery if you have any of these symptoms.**
- **Do not drink alcohol**, including beer, wine, and liquor. This may make your liver disease worse.

What are the possible side effects of Ribasphere (ribavirin, USP)?

Ribasphere (ribavirin, USP) may cause serious side effects including:

See “**What is the most important information I should know about Ribasphere (ribavirin, USP)?**”

- **Swelling and irritation of your pancreas (pancreatitis).** You may have stomach pain, nausea, vomiting or diarrhea.
- **Severe allergic reactions.** Symptoms may include hives, wheezing, trouble breathing, chest pain, swelling of your mouth, tongue, or lips, or severe rash.
- **Serious breathing problems.** Difficulty breathing may be a sign of a serious lung infection (pneumonia) that can lead to death.
- **Serious eye problems** that may lead to vision loss or blindness.
- **Liver problems.** Some people may get worsening of liver function. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you have any of these symptoms: stomach bloating, confusion, brown urine, and yellow eyes.

- **Severe depression**
- **Suicidal thoughts and attempts**

Call your healthcare provider or get medical help right away if you have any of the symptoms listed above. These may be signs of a serious side effect of Ribasphere (ribavirin, USP) treatment.

Common side effects of Ribasphere (ribavirin, USP) taken with peginterferon alfa-2a include:

- flu-like symptoms-feeling tired, headache, shaking along with high temperature (fever), and muscle or joint aches
- mood changes, feeling irritable, anxiety, and difficulty sleeping
- loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea
- hair loss
- itching

Tell your healthcare provider about any side effect that bothers you or that does not go away.

These are not all the possible side effects of Ribasphere (ribavirin, USP) treatment. For more information, ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist.

Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects. You may report side effects to FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.

You may also report side effects to Three Rivers Pharmaceuticals, LLC at 1-877-377-7862.

How should I store Ribasphere (ribavirin, USP)?

- Store Ribasphere (ribavirin, USP) tablets between 59°F and 86°F (15°C and 30°C).
- Keep the bottle tightly closed.

Keep Ribasphere (ribavirin, USP) and all medicines out of the reach of children.

General information about the safe and effective use of Ribasphere (ribavirin, USP)

It is not known if treatment with Ribasphere (ribavirin, USP) can cure hepatitis C or if it can prevent liver damage (cirrhosis), liver failure or liver cancer that is caused by hepatitis C virus infections. It is not known if treatment with Ribasphere (ribavirin, USP) will prevent an infected person from spreading the hepatitis C virus to another person.

Medicines are sometimes prescribed for purposes other than those listed in a Medication Guide. Do not use Ribasphere (ribavirin, USP) for a condition for which it was not prescribed. Do not give Ribasphere (ribavirin, USP) to other people, even if they have the same symptoms that you have. It may harm them.

This Medication Guide summarizes the most important information about Ribasphere (ribavirin, USP). If you would like more information, talk with your healthcare provider. You can ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist for information about Ribasphere (ribavirin, USP) that is written for healthcare professionals.

What are the ingredients in Ribasphere (ribavirin, USP)?

Active Ingredient: ribavirin

Inactive Ingredients: microcrystalline cellulose, lactose monohydrate, croscarmellose sodium, povidone K27-33, magnesium stearate, and purified water. The tablet is coated with partially hydrolyzed polyvinyl alcohol, polyethylene glycol 3350, talc, titanium dioxide, FD&C blue #2 [indigo carmine aluminum lake] (200 mg tablet only), FD&C blue #1 [brilliant blue FCF aluminum lake] (400 mg and 600 mg tablets only), and carnauba wax.

This Medication Guide has been approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

¹ PEGASYS is a trademark of Hoffmann-La Roche Inc.

² Imuran is a registered trademark of Prometheus Laboratories, Inc.

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