**What are side effects?**
Side effects are the feelings of discomfort that occur when one starts taking ART drugs.

Side effects usually go away after your body gets used to ART.

It might take your body some time to get used to ART. This period usually lasts about four to six weeks, but may last longer. Side effects usually go away after your body gets used to ART.

There are simple things you can do to lessen many side effects.

Some side effects may be a sign of more serious problems. It is important to tell your doctor about all side effects.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Side Effect</th>
<th>What to do</th>
<th>Go to the Clinic if:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Headache</td>
<td>Rub the base of your head with your thumbs &amp; your temples gently.</td>
<td>Your vision becomes blurry or unfocused.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rest in a quiet, dark room with your eyes closed.</td>
<td>Aspirin or paracetamol does not stop the pain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Place cold cloths over your eyes and forehead.</td>
<td>You have frequent or very painful headaches.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Avoid things with caffeine such as coffee, strong tea, and some sodas.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Take 2 tablets–paracetamol every 4 hours with food.</td>
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Side Effect

• Headache

What to do

• Rub the base of your head with your thumbs & your temples gently.
• Rest in a quiet, dark room with your eyes closed.
• Place cold cloths over your eyes and forehead.
• Avoid things with caffeine such as coffee, strong tea, and some sodas.
• Take 2 tablets—paracetamol every 4 hours with food.
• Visit your doctor for consultation.

Go to the Clinic if:

• Your vision becomes blurred or unfocused.
• Aspirin or paracetamol does not stop the pain.
• You have frequent or very painful headaches.
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<tr>
<td><strong>Dry Mouth</strong></td>
<td><strong>Rinse your mouth with clean warm water and salt.</strong></td>
<td>You also have spots on your tongue or in your mouth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Avoid sweets</strong></td>
<td>You have trouble swallowing food.</td>
</tr>
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Side Effect
• Dry Mouth

What to do
• Rinse your mouth with clean warm water and salt.
• Avoid sweets
• Avoid things with caffeine such as coffee, strong tea and some sodas.
• Visit your doctor for consultation

Go to the Clinic if:
• You also have spots on your tongue or in your mouth.
• You have trouble swallowing food.
## ART Drug Side Effects

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<tr>
<td><strong>Skin Rash</strong></td>
<td>- Wash often with unscented soap and water</td>
<td>- If the side effects persist, visit your doctor for consultation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Keep the skin clean and dry</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Use calamine lotion for itching</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Avoid the sun when you have a rash</td>
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Side Effect
• Skin Rash

What to do
• Wash often with unscented soap and water
• Keep the skin clean and dry
• Use calamine lotion for itching
• Avoid the sun when you have a rash
• Visit your doctor for consultation

Go to the Clinic if:
If the side effects persist, visit your doctor for consultation
## ART Drug Side Effects

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<tr>
<td>Diarrhoea</td>
<td><em>Eat small meals more times a day</em>&lt;br&gt; <em>Eat easy to chew foods - bananas, rice</em>&lt;br&gt; <em>Drink lots of clean boiled water.</em>&lt;br&gt; <em>Take Oral rehydration salts (ORS)</em>&lt;br&gt; <em>Avoid spicy or fried foods.</em></td>
<td><em>There is blood in the diarrhoea.</em>&lt;br&gt; <em>You have diarrhoea more than 4 times a day.</em>&lt;br&gt; <em>You also have fever.</em>&lt;br&gt; <em>You are thirsty but cannot eat or drink properly.</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Side Effect
• Diarrhoea

What to do
• Eat small meals more times a day, rather than fewer large meals
• Eat easy foods – bananas, rice
• Drink lots of clean boiled water.
• Take Oral rehydration salts (ORS)
• Avoid spicy or fried foods.

Go to the Clinic if:
• There is blood in the diarrhoea.
• You have diarrhoea more than 4 times a day.
• You also have fever.
• You are thirsty but cannot eat or drink properly
### Side Effect

#### Anaemia

**Signs that you have anaemia include pale (white) palms and fingernails.**

**What to do**
- Eat fish, meat, chicken
- Spinach, asparagus, dark leafy greens, and lima beans.
- Take iron tablets

**Go to the Clinic if:**
- You have been tired for 3-4 weeks, and you are feeling more and more tired.
- If both of your feet are swelling
Signs that you have anemia include pale (white) palms and fingernails.

Side Effect
• Anaemia

What to do
• Eat fish, meat, chicken
• Spinach, asparagus, dark leafy greens, and lima beans.
• Take iron tablets

Go to the Clinic if:
• You have been tired for 3-4 weeks, and you are feeling more and more tired.
• If both of your feet are swelling
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feeling Dizzy</td>
<td>If you feel dizzy, sit down until the feelings go away.</td>
<td>If the side effects persist, visit your doctor for consultation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Try not to lift anything heavy or move quickly.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Take EFV right before you go to sleep.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These side effects may occur when taking efivarenz (EFV). They usually go away after a few weeks.
These side effects may occur when taking efavirenz (EFV). They usually go away after a few weeks.

**Side Effect**
- Feeling Dizzy

**What to do**
- If you feel dizzy, sit down until the feelings go away.
- Try not to lift anything heavy or move quickly.
- Take EFV just before you go to sleep.

**Go to the Clinic if:**
If the side effects persist, visit your doctor for consultation.
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<tr>
<td><strong>Hair loss</strong></td>
<td>Protect hair from damage – don’t use dye, straightening, braiding, or corn-rows.</td>
<td>If the side effects persist, visit your doctor for consultation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Don’t buy products that promise to grow hair back. They don’t work.</td>
<td></td>
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</table>
These sides effects may occur when taking efivarenz (EFV). They usually go away after a few weeks.

**Side Effect**

- Hair Loss

**What to do**

- Protect hair from damage – don’t use dye, straightening, braiding, or corn-rows.
- Don’t buy products that promise to grow hair back. They don’t work.

**Go to the Clinic if:**

If the side effects persist, visit your doctor for consultation.
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<tr>
<td>Tingling or pain in hands or feet</td>
<td>Wear loose-fitting shoes and socks</td>
<td>The tingling does not go away or gets worse.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Keep feet uncovered in bed.</td>
<td>The pain is preventing you from being able to walk.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Walk a little but not too much.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Soak feet in warm water/massage with cloth soaked in warm water</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Try ibuprofen to reduce pain and swelling (you can take up to 400 mg every 8 hours with food. Do not take for more than two days without talking to the clinic.)</td>
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Side Effect

• Tingling or pain in hands or feet

What to do

• Wear loose-fitting shoes and socks
• Keep feet uncovered in bed.
• Walk a little but not too much.
• Soak feet in warm water/massage with cloth soaked in warm water
• Try ibuprofen to reduce pain and swelling. (You can take up to 400 mg every 8 hours with food. Do not take for more than two days without talking to your doctor.)

Go to the Clinic if:

• The tingling does not go away or gets worse.
• The pain is preventing you from being able to walk.
## ART Drug Side Effects

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<td>Nausea and Vomiting</td>
<td>Ask your doctor if you can take ART drugs with food</td>
<td>You have sharp pains in stomach.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Eat lots of small meals rather than big meals</td>
<td>You also have fever.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Take sips of clean, boiled water, weak tea, or Oral rehydration salts (ORS) until the vomiting stops.</td>
<td>There is blood in the vomit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Avoid spicy or fried foods.</td>
<td>Vomiting lasts more than a day.</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>You are very thirsty but cannot eat or drink properly.</td>
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Side Effect
• Nausea and Vomiting

What to do
• Take ART drugs with food
• Eat lots of small meals rather than big meals.
• Take sips of clean, boiled water, weak tea, or Oral rehydration salts (ORS) until the vomiting stops.
• Avoid spicy or fried foods.

Go to the Clinic if:
• You have sharp pains in stomach.
• You also have fever.
• There is blood in the vomit.
• Vomiting lasts more than a day.
• You are very thirsty but cannot eat or drink properly.
• The Nausea and Vomiting does not go away or gets worse.
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<td><strong>Unusual or bad dreams</strong></td>
<td>Try to do something that makes you happy and calm right before you go to sleep.</td>
<td>If you can’t sleep for several nights.</td>
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These side effects may occur when taking efavirenz. They usually go away after a few weeks. Avoid food with a lot of fat. Avoid alcohol and street drugs as these will make things worse.
These side effects may occur when taking efivarenz (EFV). They usually go away after a few weeks.

**Side Effect**
- Unusual or bad dreams

**What to do**
- Try to do something that makes you happy and calm just before you go to sleep.
- Avoid alcohol and street drugs as these will make things worse.
- Avoid food with a lot of fat.

**Go to the Clinic if:**
- If you can't sleep for several nights.
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<td>Feeling Tired</td>
<td>Get up and go to bed at the same time everyday</td>
<td>You feel too tired to eat or move.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Get a little exercise</td>
<td>You cannot swallow or eat enough to keep strong</td>
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<td>Keep easy to make foods for when you are too tired to cook</td>
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You feel too tired to eat or move.

You cannot swallow or eat enough to keep strong.
Side Effect
• Feeling Tired

What to do
• Get up and go to bed at the same time everyday
• Get a little exercise
• Keep easy to make foods for times when you are too tired to cook

Go to the Clinic if:
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<td>Feelings of sadness or worry.</td>
<td>Talk about your feelings with others.</td>
<td>You have serious, sad or very worrying thoughts.</td>
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<td>These side effects may occur when taking efivarenz. They usually go away after a few weeks.</td>
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<td>You are thinking about killing yourself.</td>
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<td>You are very aggressive or very scared.</td>
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These side effects may occur when taking efivarenz (EFV). They usually go away after a few weeks.

**Side Effect**
- Feelings of sadness or worry

**What to do**
- Talk about your feelings with others.

**Go to the Clinic if:**
- You have serious, sad or very worrying thoughts.
- You are thinking about killing yourself.
- You are very aggressive or very scared.
You are not alone!

Remember, over a million people around the world take ART everyday, you too can take them successfully.
Antiretroviral Therapy: Managing the Side Effects

This booklet is designed to help you detect and understand how to deal with side effects.