Isentress

**Generic Name:** raltegravir

**Pronunciation:** eye-SEN-tress

**Abbreviation:** RAL

**Drug Class:** Integrase Inhibitors

**Company:** Merck & Company

**Approval Status:** Approved

**Generic Version Available:** No

**Experimental Code:** MK-0518

---

**Drug Indication**


---

**General Info**

Isentress is an HIV medication. It is in a category of HIV medicines called integrase inhibitors. Isentress was approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for use by people living with HIV in October 2007.

Isentress is approved for treatment-experienced people who have HIV strains that are resistant to multiple antiretroviral drugs and for people with drug-sensitive HIV strains, such as those starting antiretroviral therapy for the first time.

Isentress must be used in combination with other HIV drugs.
**Dosage**

**Adult Dose:** Two 600 mg (HD) tablets once a day for those who are treatment naive or whose virus has been suppressed on an initial regimen of twice-daily Isentress, or one 400 mg tablet twice a day.

**Pediatric Dose:** 55lbs (25kg) or more: one 400 mg tablet twice a day; Less than 55lbs (25kg): dosing based on body weight

**Dosing Info:** Take with or without food.

**Side Effects**

Common side effects include diarrhea, nausea, headache, and insomnia.

Rash is another possible side effect of Isentress. These rashes usually go away without any change in treatment. In a small number of patients, rash may be serious. If you develop rash, call your doctor as soon as possible.

Blood tests showed abnormally elevated levels of a muscle enzyme—creatine kinase—in some patients receiving Isentress. Isentress should be used with caution by patients who are at an increased risk of muscle problems like myopathy and rhabdomyolysis, which includes patients using other medications known to cause these conditions.

**Drug Interactions**

Isentress can interact with Rifadin (rifampin), an antibiotic. Rifadin (rifampin) can decrease raltegravir levels in the bloodstream, requiring a doubling of the Isentress dose while Rifadin is being used.

Isentress might interact with drugs that are called “UGT inducers.” These include, among other drugs, some anticonvulsants and some atypical antipsychotics.

Important hepatitis C treatment drug-drug interactions: Isentress can be combined with Sovaldi (sofosbuvir), Harvoni (ledipasvir/sofosbuvir), Olysio/Sovriad (simeprevir), Viekira Pak (ombitasvir/paritaprevir/ritonavir/dasabuvir). ribavirin, or pegylated interferon alfa.

Before taking this medication, tell your doctor if you have kidney disease or liver disease (including hepatitis B). In addition, tell your doctor if you are pregnant or planning to become pregnant, if you are breast feeding, and all your medical conditions, including all prescription and over-the-counter medications and supplements you are taking.


Co-Pay Program Info: [https://www.poz.com/basics/hiv-basics/drug-assistance-programs](https://www.poz.com/basics/hiv-basics/drug-assistance-programs)

Patient Assistance Program Info: [https://www.poz.com/basics/hiv-basics/drug-assistance-programs](https://www.poz.com/basics/hiv-basics/drug-assistance-programs)

Last Reviewed: June 1, 2017