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GILEAD | Medical Information

Descovy® (FTC/TAF) Crushing or Splitting of Tablets

This document is in response to your request for information regarding the crushing or splitting of Descovy® (emtricitabine/tenofovir alafenamide [FTC/TAF]) tablets.

Some data may be outside of the US FDA-approved prescribing information. In providing this data, Gilead Sciences, Inc. is not making any representation as to its clinical relevance or to the use of any Gilead product(s). For information about the approved conditions of use of any Gilead drug product, please consult the FDA-approved prescribing information.

The full indication, important safety information, and boxed warnings are available at: www.gilead.com/-/media/files/pdfs/medicines/hiv/descovy/descovy_pi.

Product Labeling[1]

There is no information in the FTC/TAF product label about the crushing or splitting of FTC/TAF; therefore, it is not recommended that FTC/TAF be administered as a crushed or split tablet.

In regard to the individual components of FTC/TAF, FTC has a solubility of approximately 112 mg/mL in water at 25°C and TAF has a solubility of 4.7 mg/mL in water at 20°C.

Available Data on Crushing or Splitting FTC/TAF Tablets

Gilead Data

Crushing FTC/TAF tablets and adding to a liquid medium has not been studied and is not recommended. TAF is soluble in water; however, it has a bitter and burnt aromatic flavor profile.[2] Currently, there are no studies evaluating the pharmacokinetics (eg, oral bioavailability) of a crushed FTC/TAF tablet dispersed in a liquid medium (eg, milk, water, or juice) compared with the pharmacokinetics of a whole tablet.

Similarly, splitting FTC/TAF tablets has not been studied, and it is not recommended. Currently, there are no studies evaluating the pharmacokinetics of a split FTC/TAF tablet versus a whole tablet.

Non-Gilead Data

A literature search was conducted in Ovid MEDLINE and Embase databases for studies published up to August 24, 2026, using the search terms Descovy, emtricitabine, tenofovir alafenamide, cutting, crushing, splitting tablets, and related search terms. The following information was found.

Case report

There are limitations in the interpretation of case reports. Case reports cannot be generalized. Unlike controlled clinical trials, causality cannot be inferred based on uncontrolled observational data. Additionally, incidence or prevalence cannot be estimated due to the lack of a representative population sample. Other limitations of case reports include the retrospective design and publication bias.[3]

Crushed FTC/TAF tablets administered via PEG tube[4]

A 54-year-old male with HIV-1 and squamous cell carcinoma of the tongue switched from abacavir/lamivudine + dolutegravir (DTG) to FTC/TAF + DTG 50 mg. Due to vocal cord hypomobility that necessitated percutaneous endoscopic gastrostomy (PEG) tube placement for medication administration and nutrition, the patient pulverized FTC/TAF and DTG, mixed them with water, and injected the mixture via a catheter syringe through the PEG port, followed by administration of a can of enteral nutrition. Virologic suppression improved from an HIV-1 RNA load of 28 c/mL at FTC/TAF initiation to HIV-1 RNA <20 c/mL at 8 and 10 months after FTC/TAF initiation. No adverse events or intolerances were reported.

References

1. Enclosed. Gilead Sciences Inc, DESCOVY® (emtricitabine and tenofovir alafenamide) tablets, for oral use. U. S. Prescribing Information. Foster City, CA.
2. Gilead Sciences Inc. Data on File.
3. Nissen T, Wynn R. The Clinical Case Report: A Review of Its Merits and Limitations. *BMC research notes.* 2014;7:264.
4. Fulco PP, Higginson RT. Enhanced HIV Viral Load Suppression with Crushed Combination Tablets Containing Tenofovir Alafenamide and Emtricitabine. *Am J Health Syst Pharm.* 2018;75(10):594-595.

Product Label

For the full indication, important safety information, and boxed warning(s), please refer to the Descovy US Prescribing Information available at: www.gilead.com/-/media/files/pdfs/medicines/hiv/descovy/descovy_pi.

Follow-Up

For any additional questions, please contact Gilead Medical Information at:

☎1-866-MEDI-GSI (1-866-633-4474) or 🖱 www.askgileadmedical.com

Adverse Event Reporting

Please report all adverse events to:

Gilead Global Patient Safety ☎ 1-800-445-3235, option 3 or
🖱 www.gilead.com/utility/contact/report-an-adverse-event

FDA MedWatch Program by ☎ 1-800-FDA-1088 or ✉MedWatch, FDA, 5600 Fishers Ln, Rockville, MD 20852 or 🖱 www.accessdata.fda.gov/scripts/medwatch

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