

## What are side effects?

Side effects are feelings of discomfort that occur when one starts taking ART. Side effects usually go away after your body gets used to ART.

The following are some side effects that occur due to taking ART:

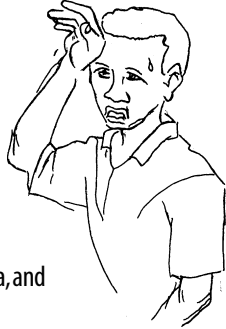
## Headache

### 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.



## 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.

## 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

### Go to the Clinic if:

If the side effects persist, visit your doctor for consultation



## 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



**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



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

### 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



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

### 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



## 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.



## 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.



## Unusual or bad dreams

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

### 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.



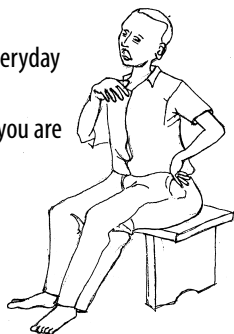
## Feeling Tired

### 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:

- You feel too tired to eat or move
- You cannot swallow or eat enough to keep you strong



## Feelings of sadness or

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

### 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



You may experience some side effects in the initial period of taking ART. These side effects lessen or disappear as your body gets used to ART.