



Book Supplement

Drug Treatment for Herpes Zoster

Agent	Notes
Acyclovir	Therapy with oral acyclovir initiated within 72 hours of lesion onset will result in shorter duration of viral shedding and new lesion formation, and acceleration of the events of cutaneous healing. Most importantly, acyclovir therapy can reduce the duration of zoster-associated pain. Acyclovir is safe. The dose of acyclovir required to treat VZV infections is higher than the dose recommended for HSV infections. Adjustment of the acyclovir dosage is required for patients with renal insufficiency.
Valacyclovir	Oral valacyclovir therapy initiated within 72 hours of lesion onset has benefits similar to acyclovir. Valacyclovir is slightly superior to acyclovir in accelerating the resolution of zoster-associated pain. Valacyclovir is safe. Adjustment of the dosage of valacyclovir is required for patients with renal insufficiency.
Famciclovir	Oral famciclovir therapy initiated within 72 hours of lesion onset has benefits similar to acyclovir. Importantly, famciclovir can reduce the duration of postherpetic neuralgia. Valacyclovir and famciclovir are therapeutically equivalent for treatment of uncomplicated herpes zoster. Famciclovir is safe. Adjustment of the famciclovir dose is required for patients with renal insufficiency.

AIDS = acquired immunodeficiency syndrome; HSV = herpes simplex virus; VZV = varicella-zoster virus.

Table from *Physicians Information and Education Resource (PIER)*, Herpes Zoster module.