

# NEQCA Rxreview

## Oral Antiviral Medications for Herpes Simplex and Zoster Infections

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Oral medicines to treat herpes include: acyclovir, famciclovir, and valacyclovir (Valtrex). Currently, **acyclovir** and **famciclovir** are available as generics and are the most cost effective first-line options.

<b><i>Genital Herpes: 1<sup>st</sup> Episode Recommended Regimens* (non HIV-infected patients)**</i></b>		
<b>acyclovir</b> 400 mg po three times a day for 7–10 days <b>OR</b> <b>acyclovir</b> 200 mg po five times a day for 7–10 days	<b>famciclovir</b> 250 mg po three times a day for 7–10 days	Valtrex 1000 mg po twice a day for 7–10 days
<i>*Treatment might be extended if healing is incomplete after 10 days of therapy.</i>		
<b><i>Genital Herpes: Recurrent Episodes Recommended Regimens (non HIV-infected patients)**</i></b>		
<b>acyclovir</b> 400 mg po three times a day for 5 days <b>OR</b> <b>acyclovir</b> 800 mg po twice a day for 5 days <b>OR</b> <b>acyclovir</b> 800 mg po three times a day for 2 days	<b>famciclovir</b> 125 mg po twice daily for 5 days <b>OR</b> <b>famciclovir</b> 1000 mg po twice daily for 1 day	Valtrex 500 mg po twice a day for 3 days <b>OR</b> Valtrex 1000 mg po once a day for 5 days
<b><i>Genital Herpes: Daily Suppression Recommended Regimens (non HIV-infected patients)**</i></b>		
<b>acyclovir</b> 400 mg po twice a day	<b>famciclovir</b> 250 mg po twice a day	Valtrex 500 mg po once a day <b>OR</b> Valtrex 1000 mg po once a day  <i>(Valtrex 500 mg once daily is less effective than other Valtrex/acyclovir regimens in patients with &gt; 9 episodes per year)</i>
<b><i>Herpes labialis: Recurrent Episodes Recommended Regimens (non HIV-infected patients)**</i></b>		
<b>famciclovir</b> 1500 mg po x 1 dose	Valtrex 2000 mg po twice a day x 1 day	
<b><i>Herpes zoster** †</i></b>		
<b>acyclovir</b> 800 mg po five times a day for 7 days	<b>famciclovir</b> 500 mg po three times a day for 7 days	Valtrex 1000 mg po three times a day for 7 days
<i>†Antiviral therapy has been shown to be beneficial only when patients are treated within 72 hours of onset of the herpes zoster rash.</i>		

**\*\*Please note dose adjustments may be required in patients with impaired kidney function**

**References:**

[www.cdc.gov/std/treatment/2006](http://www.cdc.gov/std/treatment/2006)

Zovirax, Famvir and Valtrex 2008 Product Labeling.