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Protease Inhibitors (PIs)

[en español](#) . [What are they?](#)

Experimental drugs are *italicized*, and approved drugs are in regular, non-italicized type.

Brand Name	Generic Name	Abbreviation	Experimental Code	Pharmaceutical Company
Agenerase®	amprenavir	APV	141W94 or VX-478	GlaxoSmithKline
Aptivus®	tipranavir	TPV	PNU-140690	Boehringer Ingelheim
Crixivan®	indinavir	IDV	MK-639	Merck & Co.
Invirase®	saquinavir	SQV	Ro-31-8959	Hoffmann-La Roche
Kaletra®	lopinavir + ritonavir	LPV	ABT-378/r	Abbott Laboratories
Lexiva®	fosamprenavir	FPV	GW-438948 or VX-175	GlaxoSmithKline
Norvir®	ritonavir	RTV	ABT-538	Abbott Laboratories
Prezista™	darunavir	DPV	TMC-114	Tibotec
Reyataz®	atazanavir	ATZ	BMS-232632	Bristol-Myers Squibb
Viracept®	nelfinavir	NFV	AG-1343	Pfizer
	brecanavir		GW640385 or VX-385	GlaxoSmithKline

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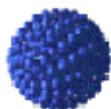
What are Protease Inhibitors (PIs)?

Protease Inhibitors (PIs) are a class of anti-HIV drugs. When one PI is used in combination with other anti-HIV drugs – usually a total of 3 drugs – then this combination therapy can block the replication of HIV in a person's blood.

Protease inhibitors prevent T-cells that have been infected with HIV from producing new copies of the virus.

When HIV infects a cell in a person's body, it copies its own genetic code into the cell's DNA. In this way, the cell is then "programmed" to create new copies of HIV. Once HIV's genetic material (RNA) is inside a T-cell's DNA, the cell produces a long strand of genetic material that must be cut up and put together correctly to form new copies of the virus. Cutting up this strand requires a scissor-like enzyme called protease. PIs block this enzyme and prevent the cell from producing new viruses.

To learn more on how HIV infects a T-cell and begins to create more viruses, and where each class of anti-HIV drugs blocks this process, click on the following lesson link:



[The HIV Life Cycle \(and the targets of each class of anti-HIV drugs\)](#)

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This content is written by the Founder & Writers of AIDSmeds.com and reviewed by Dr. Howard Grossman, our Medical Editor. Please find profiles of this writing team on our ["About Us"](#) page.



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