

Patient Education

VENLAFAXINE SUSTAINED-RELEASE - ORAL

IMPORTANT NOTE: The following information is intended to supplement, not substitute for, the expertise and judgment of your physician, pharmacist or other healthcare professional. It should not be construed to indicate that use of the drug is safe, appropriate, or effective for you. Consult your healthcare professional before using this drug.

VENLAFAXINE SUSTAINED-RELEASE - ORAL

(ven-luh-FAX-eeen)

COMMON BRAND NAME(S): Effexor XR

USES:

This medication is an antidepressant (serotonin-norepinephrine reuptake inhibitor type) used in the treatment of depression and anxiety disorders (Generalized Anxiety Disorder, Social Anxiety Disorder). It works by restoring the balance of natural chemicals (neurotransmitters) in the brain, thereby improving mood and feelings of well-being.

HOW TO USE:

Take this medication by mouth once a day, exactly as prescribed. Take this medication with food.

Swallow the medication whole. Do not crush, break, chew, or place the capsule in water. If you have difficulty swallowing this medication whole, the capsule may be opened and the contents sprinkled onto a spoonful of applesauce and taken as directed. Swallow the mixture immediately. Do not chew the food/medication mixture. Follow each dose with a glass of water to wash the medication down.

During the first few days your doctor may gradually increase your dose to allow your body to adjust to the medication. Do not take the medication more often or increase your dose without consulting your doctor. Your condition will not improve any faster but the risk of serious side effects will be increased if you do not follow the directions.

Do not stop taking this drug suddenly without your doctor's approval. Your dose may need to be gradually reduced to prevent adverse effects.

SIDE EFFECTS:

This medication may initially cause dizziness and nausea as your body adjusts to the medication. Other side effects reported include trouble sleeping, nervousness, sweating, loss of appetite, dry mouth, tremor, blurred vision, constipation, drowsiness, change in sexual ability, or anxiety. If any of these effects persist or worsen, notify your doctor promptly.

Notify your doctor immediately if you develop any of these serious effects: rapid or irregular heartbeat, chest pain, severe headache, painful or difficult urination, muscle cramping, unusual or severe mental/mood changes, seizures.

Tell your doctor immediately if any of these unlikely but serious side effects occur: black stools, "coffee ground" vomit, easy bruising/bleeding.

An allergic reaction to this drug is unlikely, but seek immediate medical attention if it occurs. Symptoms of an allergic reaction include: rash, itching, swelling, dizziness, trouble breathing.

If you notice other effects not listed above, contact your doctor or pharmacist.

PRECAUTIONS:

Tell your doctor your medical history, especially of: kidney disease, liver disease, heart disease, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, seizures, glaucoma, any allergies.

This drug may make you dizzy or drowsy and may affect judgment, thinking, or your physical reactions; use caution engaging in activities requiring alertness such as driving or using machinery. Avoid alcoholic beverages.

Though uncommon, depression can lead to thoughts or attempts of suicide. Tell your doctor immediately if you have any suicidal thoughts, worsening depression, or any other mental/mood changes (including new or worsening anxiety, agitation, panic attacks, trouble sleeping, irritability, hostile/angry feelings, impulsive actions, severe restlessness, rapid speech). Keep all medical appointments so your healthcare professional can monitor your progress closely and adjust/change your medication if needed.

Elderly persons may be more sensitive to the effects of this medication. Use with caution.

This medication should be used only if clearly needed during pregnancy. Discuss the risks and benefits with your doctor.

If this medication is used during the last 3 months of pregnancy, infrequently your newborn may develop symptoms including feeding or breathing difficulties, seizures, muscle stiffness, jitteriness, or constant crying. However, do not stop taking this medication unless your doctor directs you to do so. Report any such symptoms to your doctor promptly.

It is not known if this medication appears in breast milk. Consult your doctor before breast-feeding.

DRUG INTERACTIONS:

This drug should not be used with the following medications because very serious interactions may occur: MAO inhibitors (e.g., tranylcypromine, phenelzine, isocarboxazid, selegiline, linezolid, furazolidone).

If you are currently using or have recently stopped taking an MAO inhibitor within the last 14 days, tell your doctor or pharmacist before starting venlafaxine.

Before using this medication, tell your doctor or pharmacist of any prescription and nonprescription products you may use, especially of: cimetidine, other drugs which can cause bleeding/bruising (e.g., thrombolytic drugs such as TPA, anticoagulants such as heparin or warfarin, antiplatelet drugs including NSAIDs such as ibuprofen), other drugs that increase serotonin effects (e.g., lithium, triptans such as sumatriptan, SSRI antidepressants such as fluoxetine), sedatives, narcotic pain relievers (e.g., codeine, morphine), seizure medication, medicine for weight control.

Low-dose aspirin (usually 81-325 mg per day) for heart attack or stroke prevention should be continued unless your doctor instructs you otherwise. Aspirin is similar to NSAID drugs, and can increase the risk of bleeding in combination with this medication (see above). Discuss the risks and benefits with your doctor.

Do not start or stop any medicine without doctor or pharmacist approval.

OVERDOSE:

If overdose is suspected, contact your local poison control center or emergency room immediately. US residents can call the US national poison hotline at 1-800-222-1222. Canadian residents should call their local poison control center directly. Symptoms of overdose may include sleepiness, irregular heartbeat, and seizures.

NOTES:

Laboratory and/or medical tests (e.g., blood pressure monitoring) may be done periodically while taking this medication to monitor the effects. See your doctor regularly.

Do not share this medication with others.

MISSED DOSE:

Try to take each dose at the scheduled time. If you miss a dose, take it as soon as remembered; do not take it if it is near the time for the next dose, instead, skip the missed dose and resume your usual dosing schedule. Do not "double-up" the dose to catch up.

STORAGE:

Store this medication at room temperature between 68 and 77 degrees F (20 and 25 degrees C) away from heat and light. Do not store in the bathroom. Keep this and all medications out of the reach of children and pets.