

Drug

Effexor

venlafaxine

Patient Education - English

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Generic Name: venlafaxine

Pronounced: VEN la fax een

Brand Name: Effexor XR

What is the most important information I should know about venlafaxine?

Some young people have thoughts about suicide when first taking an antidepressant. Stay alert to changes in your mood or symptoms. *Report any new or worsening symptoms to your doctor.*

Do not stop using venlafaxine without first asking your doctor.

What is venlafaxine?

Venlafaxine is a serotonin and norepinephrine reuptake inhibitor (SNRI) antidepressant.

Venlafaxine is used in adults to treat major depressive disorder, anxiety, and panic disorder.

Venlafaxine may also be used for purposes not listed in this medication guide.

What should I discuss with my healthcare provider before taking venlafaxine?



You should not take this medicine *if you are allergic to venlafaxine or desvenlafaxine (Pristiq), or if you have uncontrolled narrow-angle glaucoma.*

Do not use venlafaxine within 7 days before or 14 days after you have used an MAO inhibitor, such as isocarboxazid, linezolid, methylene blue injection, phenelzine, or tranylcypromine. A dangerous drug interaction could occur.

Tell your doctor if you also take stimulant medicine, opioid medicine, herbal products, or medicine for depression, mental illness, Parkinson's disease, migraine headaches, serious infections, or prevention of nausea and vomiting. *An interaction with venlafaxine could cause a serious condition called serotonin syndrome.*

Tell your doctor if you have ever had:

bipolar disorder (manic depression);

liver disease;

kidney disease;

heart disease, high blood pressure, high cholesterol;
 diabetes;
 glaucoma;
 a thyroid disorder;
 a seizure;
 sexual problems;
 bleeding problems; or
 low blood levels of sodium.

Some young people have thoughts about suicide when first taking an antidepressant. Your doctor should check your progress at regular visits. Your family or other caregivers should also be alert to changes in your mood or symptoms.



Not approved for use by anyone younger than 18 years old.

Taking this medicine during pregnancy could harm the baby, but stopping the medicine may not be safe for you. *Do not start or stop venlafaxine without asking your doctor.*



Do not breastfeed.

How should I take venlafaxine?

Follow all directions on your prescription label and read all medication guides or instruction sheets. Use the medicine exactly as directed.



Take with food at the same time each day.



Swallow the *extended-release capsule or tablet* whole and do not crush, chew, break, or open it.

If you cannot swallow a capsule whole, open it and mix the medicine with applesauce. Swallow the mixture right away without chewing.

Tell your doctor if you have any changes in sexual function, such as loss of interest in sex, trouble having an orgasm, or (in men) problems with erections or ejaculation. Some sexual problems can be treated.

Do not stop using venlafaxine suddenly, or you could have unpleasant symptoms (such as agitation, confusion, tingling or electric shock feelings). Ask your doctor how to safely stop using this medicine.

Your symptoms may not improve for several weeks. *You may have unpleasant symptoms if you stop using venlafaxine suddenly*. Ask your doctor before stopping the medicine.

Your blood pressure will need to be checked often.

This medicine may cause false results on a drug-screening urine test. Tell the laboratory staff that you use venlafaxine.



Store at room temperature away from moisture and heat.

What happens if I miss a dose?

Take the medicine as soon as you can, but skip the missed dose if it is almost time for your next dose. *Do not* take two doses at one time.

What happens if I overdose?



Seek emergency medical attention or call the Poison Help line at 1-800-222-1222.

What should I avoid while taking venlafaxine?



Do not drink alcohol.

Ask your doctor before taking a nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID) such as aspirin, ibuprofen, naproxen, Advil, Aleve, Motrin, and others. Using an NSAID with venlafaxine may cause you to bruise or bleed easily.



Avoid driving or hazardous activity until you know how this medicine will affect you. Your reactions could be impaired.

What are the possible side effects of venlafaxine?



Get emergency medical help if you have *signs of an allergic reaction*: skin rash or hives; difficulty breathing; swelling of your face, lips, tongue, or throat.

Report any new or worsening symptoms to your doctor, such as: mood or behavior changes, anxiety, panic attacks, trouble sleeping, or if you feel impulsive, irritable, agitated, hostile, aggressive, restless, hyperactive (mentally or physically), more depressed, or have thoughts about suicide or hurting yourself.



Call your doctor at once if you have:

blurred vision, eye pain or redness, seeing halos around lights;

cough, chest tightness, trouble breathing;

a seizure (convulsions);

unusual bleeding--nosebleeds, bleeding gums, abnormal vaginal bleeding, any bleeding that will not stop;

low blood sodium--headache, confusion, problems with thinking or memory, weakness, feeling unsteady; or

severe nervous system reaction--very stiff (rigid) muscles, high fever, sweating, confusion, fast or uneven heartbeats, tremors, feeling like you might pass out.



Seek medical attention right away if you have symptoms of serotonin syndrome, such as: agitation, hallucinations, fever, sweating, shivering, fast heart rate, muscle stiffness, twitching, loss of coordination, nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea

Common side effects may include:

headache, dizziness, drowsiness, tiredness;

feeling anxious, nervous, or jittery;

sleep problems, unusual dreams;

tremors;

fast heartbeats;

blurred vision;

nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, constipation;

changes in weight or appetite;

dry mouth, yawning;

increased sweating; or
sexual problems.

This is not a complete list of side effects and others may occur. Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects. You may report side effects to FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.

What other drugs will affect venlafaxine?



Using venlafaxine with other drugs that make you drowsy can worsen this effect. Ask your doctor before using opioid medication, a sleeping pill, a muscle relaxer, or medicine for anxiety or seizures.

Tell your doctor about all your current medicines. Many drugs can affect venlafaxine, especially:

any other antidepressant;

cimetidine;

tramadol;

St. John's wort, tryptophan (sometimes called L-tryptophan);

diet pills, weight loss medicine (such as phentermine);

a blood thinner--warfarin, Coumadin, Jantoven;

medicine to treat mood disorders, thought disorders, or mental illness--buspirone, lithium, and many others; or
migraine headache medicine--sumatriptan, zolmitriptan, and others.

This list is not complete and many other drugs may affect venlafaxine. This includes prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal products. Not all possible drug interactions are listed here.

Where can I get more information?

Your pharmacist can provide more information about venlafaxine.

Remember, keep this and all other medicines out of the reach of children, never share your medicines with others, and use this medication only for the indication prescribed.

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