

Drug

Lexapro

escitalopram

Patient Education - English

[Show Spanish](#)

Generic Name: escitalopram

Pronounced: EE sye TAL o pram

Brand Name: Lexapro

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



You should not use this medicine if you also take pimozide or citalopram (Celexa).

Do not use escitalopram within 14 days before or 14 days after you have used an MAO inhibitor, such as isocarboxazid, linezolid, methylene blue injection, phenelzine, rasagiline, selegiline, or tranylcypromine.

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.*



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.

Do not stop using escitalopram without first asking your doctor.

What is escitalopram?

Escitalopram is a selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor (SSRI) antidepressant.

Escitalopram is used to treat major depressive disorder in adults and adolescents at least 12 years old.

Escitalopram is also used to treat anxiety in adults.

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

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



You should not use this medicine if you are allergic to escitalopram or citalopram (Celexa), or if you also take pimozide.

Do not use escitalopram within 14 days before or 14 days after you have used an MAO inhibitor. A dangerous drug interaction could occur. MAO inhibitors include isocarboxazid, linezolid, phenelzine, rasagiline, selegiline, and tranylcypromine.

Be sure your doctor knows 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. *These medicines may interact with escitalopram and cause a serious condition called serotonin syndrome.*

Tell your doctor if you have ever had:

liver or kidney disease;

seizures;

low levels of sodium in your blood;

heart disease, high blood pressure;

a stroke;

bleeding problems;

sexual problems;

bipolar disorder (manic depression); or

drug addiction or suicidal thoughts.

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.



Escitalopram is not approved for use by anyone younger than 12 years old.

Ask your doctor about taking this medicine *if you are pregnant*. Taking an SSRI antidepressant during late pregnancy may cause serious medical complications in the baby. However, you may have a relapse of depression if you stop taking your antidepressant. Tell your doctor right away if you become pregnant. *Do not start or stop taking this medicine without your doctor's advice.*

If you are pregnant, your name may be listed on a pregnancy registry to track the effects of escitalopram on the baby.

If you are breastfeeding, tell your doctor if you notice drowsiness, agitation, feeding problems, or poor weight gain in the nursing baby.

How should I take escitalopram?

Follow all directions on your prescription label and read all medication guides or instruction sheets. Your doctor may occasionally change your dose. Use the medicine exactly as directed.

Take the medicine at the same time each day, with or without food.

Measure *liquid medicine* carefully. Use the dosing syringe provided, or use a medicine dose-measuring device (not a kitchen spoon).

It may take up to 4 weeks before your symptoms improve. Keep using the medication as directed and tell your doctor if your symptoms do not improve.

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.

Your doctor will need to check your progress on a regular basis. A child taking escitalopram should be checked for height and weight gain.

Do not stop using escitalopram suddenly, or you could have unpleasant withdrawal symptoms. Follow your doctor's instructions about tapering your dose.



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 escitalopram?



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



Avoid alcohol.



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 escitalopram?



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, tunnel vision, eye pain or swelling, or seeing halos around lights;

racing thoughts, unusual risk-taking behavior, feelings of extreme happiness or sadness;

pain or burning when you urinate;

(in a child taking escitalopram) slow growth or weight gain;

low levels of sodium in the body--headache, confusion, slurred speech, severe weakness, vomiting, loss of coordination, 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:

painful urination;

dizziness, drowsiness, tiredness, weakness;
feeling anxious or agitated;
increased muscle movements, feeling shaky;
sleep problems (insomnia);
sweating, dry mouth, increased thirst, loss of appetite;
nausea, constipation;
yawning;
nosebleed, heavy menstrual periods; or
decreased sex drive, impotence, or difficulty having an orgasm.

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 escitalopram?



Using escitalopram 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, especially a blood thinner such as warfarin, Coumadin, or Jantoven.

Many drugs can affect escitalopram, and some drugs should not be used at the same time. Tell your doctor about all your current medicines and any medicine you start or stop using. This includes prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal products. Not all possible interactions are listed here.

Where can I get more information?

Your pharmacist can provide more information about escitalopram.

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.

Every effort has been made to ensure that the information provided by Cerner Multum, Inc. ('Multum') is accurate, up-to-date, and complete, but no guarantee is made to that effect. Drug information contained herein may be time sensitive. Multum information has been compiled for use by healthcare practitioners and consumers in the United States and therefore Multum does not warrant that uses outside of the United States are appropriate, unless specifically indicated otherwise. Multum's drug information does not endorse drugs, diagnose patients or recommend therapy. Multum's drug information is an informational resource designed to assist licensed healthcare practitioners in caring for their patients and/or to serve consumers viewing this service as a supplement to, and not a substitute for, the expertise, skill, knowledge and judgment of healthcare practitioners. The absence of a warning for a given drug or drug combination in no way should be construed to indicate that the drug or drug combination is safe, effective or appropriate for any given patient. Multum does not assume any responsibility for any aspect of healthcare administered with the aid of information Multum provides. The information contained herein is not intended to cover all possible uses, directions, precautions, warnings, drug interactions, allergic reactions, or adverse effects. If you have questions about the drugs you are taking, check with your doctor, nurse or pharmacist.

Copyright 1996-2021 Cerner Multum, Inc. Version: 18.01. Revision Date: 11/8/2021.

Substantial effort has been made to ensure that the information provided by Epocrates is accurate and up-to-date, but this information is not intended to cover all possible uses, precautions, or other considerations relating to the therapies covered. Epocrates does not advocate or endorse the use of any drug or other therapy and does not diagnose patients. Healthcare professionals should use their professional judgment in using this information, and this information should not be considered a substitute for the care and professional judgment provided by a licensed healthcare practitioner. This information is provided on an "as is" basis, and Epocrates and its affiliates, agents and licensors assume no responsibility for any aspect of healthcare administered with the aid of this information or any other use of the information.

Copyright © 2022 Epocrates, Inc. All Rights Reserved.
Epocrates® Online is a trademark of Epocrates Inc, in the U.S. and elsewhere.