

Bupropion

Medication Information Leaflet

What is this medication for?

Bupropion belongs to a class of medications known as Norepinephrine and Dopamine Reuptake Inhibitors (NDRI). It is used to treat symptoms of depression (low mood) such as:

- Feeling sad
- Feeling hopeless or useless
- Feeling bad about yourself
- Thoughts of ending your life
- Poor sleep, energy or appetite

Bupropion is also used for other conditions, such as helping smokers to quit smoking. Check with your healthcare professional if you are unsure why you are given this medication.

How should I take/use this medication?

- Follow the directions on your medication label and take the medication as prescribed by your doctor.
- You may take Bupropion with or without food. Swallow the tablet whole. Do NOT break, split or crush the tablet.
- If you have to take Bupropion two times a day, take the first dose in the morning and the second dose at least 8 hours apart, preferably in the late afternoon or early evening.

If you are taking Bupropion for low mood:

You need to take this medication regularly for a few weeks before you feel its full benefits. You should not stop taking this medication even if you do not feel better at the beginning. Continue to take this medication even after you feel better to prevent your symptoms from returning.

Do check with your doctor on the proper length of treatment that you need.

If you are taking Bupropion to quit smoking:

Your doctor or pharmacist would have asked you to set a 'Quit Date' to stop smoking. Start taking Bupropion as prescribed by your doctor 1 week before the quit date. This medication is normally taken for 7-12 weeks to help you quit smoking. Let your doctor know if you are still smoking after 7 weeks of treatment.

Do not stop taking your medication or change the dose without checking with your healthcare professional.

What should I do if I forget to take/use this medication?

If you forget to take a dose, take it as soon as you remember. However, if it is more than half of the time to the next dose, skip the missed dose and take the next dose at your usual timing. Do not take two doses to make up for the missed dose.

What precautions should I take?

Inform your healthcare professional if:

- You are allergic to this medication or any of the other ingredients of this medication
- You are pregnant, planning to become pregnant, or breastfeeding. If you are pregnant or breastfeeding, your doctor would have discussed the potential benefits and side effects with you and should you have further questions or concerns, do consult your doctor.
- You have or have ever had:
 - Other drug allergies
 - Heart, kidney or liver disease
 - Medical conditions such as fits (seizures), eating disorders, eye problems
 - Other mental health conditions such as bipolar disorder, abnormally high or excited mood (mania) or schizophrenia (a mental health condition that affects one's perception of reality)
 - Been taking other medications for low mood in the past 2 weeks.

Bupropion may increase your blood pressure. It is important to maintain regular check-ups with your doctors.

IMPORTANT:

In some cases, particularly in young people below the age of 25 years, this medication may cause the following changes to a person's mental condition, especially in the first few weeks of treatment or during dose changes:

- New or worsening thoughts of harming yourself or ending your life
- Worsening agitation, restlessness, violent behaviour, or
- Other changes in mood or behaviour

Please inform your doctor as soon as possible, or for your family or caregiver to inform your doctor if you are unable to seek treatment on your own.

Do not stop taking this medication on your own without discussing with your doctor.

It is important to note that your doctor has prescribed this medication as he/ she feels you will benefit more from taking this medication over the possible risks that it may cause, which have a low chance of occurring, and most people take this medication without any of such problems.

What are some common side-effects of this medication?

The mentioned side effects generally affect up to 10% of patients.

- Nausea or vomiting
 - Take the medication with or after food.
 - Take small but frequent meals. Avoid fatty or spicy food.
- Difficulty sleeping
 - Avoid daytime naps, listen to relaxing music at bedtime or avoid taking the last dose near bedtime.
- Dry mouth
 - Chew sugar-free gum, suck on sugar-free hard candies or ice chips, or sip water regularly.
- Constipation
 - Drink more water (if you do not have any fluid restriction), eat more high- fibre foods, and exercise regularly
 - Consult your doctor or pharmacist if you need medication to relieve your condition.
- Mild nervousness
 - May occur at the start of treatment and improves over time.
- Headache; fast heartbeat; weight loss; sweating
 - Speak with your doctor if it affects your daily life

Most of the side effects listed here will improve with time. Speak with your doctor if they continue, get worse or are affecting your daily life.

What are some rare but serious side-effects that I need to seek medical advice immediately?

The symptoms of a drug allergy include one or more of the following:

- Swollen face/eyes/lips/tongue
- Difficulty in breathing
- Itchy skin rashes over your whole body

Very rarely (affect less than 1% of patients) this medication may cause:

- Flu-like symptoms (fever, chills, sore throat); mouth sores/ulcers
- Severe vomiting or diarrhoea, loss of appetite, stomach pain
- Strong feelings of agitation or anxiety, restlessness or inability to sit still, or irritability
- Unusual thought; talking, feeling and acting with excitement that you cannot control
- Fits (seizures)
- Severe or continuing headache, or ringing in the ears
- Fast, pounding or irregular heartbeat

If you experience any of these symptoms, you should stop your medication and consult your healthcare professional immediately.

What food or medication should I avoid when I take this medication?

Avoid drinking alcohol while taking Bupropion as it may make you feel very drowsy. This medication may interact with other medications. If you intend to take any over the counter medication, supplements, herbal remedy or traditional Chinese medicine, consult your doctor or healthcare professional first to confirm that it is safe to take with Bupropion.

How should I store this medication?

Store in a cool and dry place, away from direct sunlight. Keep this medication away from children.

How should I throw away this medication safely?

Pack this medication into a black trash bag and seal it tightly before throwing into the rubbish chute or bin.

Disclaimers

If you take more than the recommended dose, please seek medical advice immediately. The information provided on this page does not replace information from your healthcare professional. Please consult your healthcare professional for more information.

This article is jointly developed by members of the National Medication Information workgroup. The workgroup consists of cluster partners (National Healthcare Group, National University Health System and SingHealth), community pharmacies (Guardian, Unity and Watsons) and Pharmaceutical Society of Singapore. The content does not reflect drug availability and supply information in pharmacies and healthcare institutions. You are advised to check with the respective institutions for such information.

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