

# Tianeptine

Medication Information Leaflet



## What is this medication for?

This medication is an antidepressant and 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.

This medication may also be used for other conditions. Check with your healthcare professional if you are unsure why you are given this medication.

## How should I take/use this medication?

- Follow the instructions on your medication label and take this medication as prescribed by your doctor.
- This medication may be taken with or without food.
- This medication needs to be taken 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 how long you will have to be on this medication.
- Do not stop taking your medication 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
  - Been unable to take sugars such as fructose, glucose, or galactose
  - Heart or kidney disease
  - Medical conditions involving the stomach and/or intestines
  - Other mental health conditions such as bipolar disorder, abnormally high or excited mood (mania)
- You are undergoing an operation involving general anaesthesia, a process that involves putting you in a sleep-like state

### IMPORTANT:

If you notice any changes in your mental condition especially in the first few weeks of treatment and during dose changes, you need to check with your doctor immediately. Do watch for any of the following changes in mental condition:

- New or increasing thoughts of harming yourself
- Worsening anxiety, restlessness, violent behaviour, or
- Other changes in mood or behaviour.

Be sure that your family or caregiver are also aware of the above symptoms so they can call your doctor if you are unable to seek treatment on your own.

## What are some common side-effects of this medication?

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

- Nausea

- Take the medication with or after food.
- Take small but frequent meals and avoid fatty or spicy food
- Drowsiness or tiredness
  - Avoid driving, or taking part in activities that requires concentration.
  - Discuss with your doctor if you can take your medication at a different time of the day.
- Dry mouth
  - Chew sugar-free gum, suck on sugar-free hard candies or ice chips, sip water regularly
- Constipation (difficulty passing motion)
  - 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.
- Dizziness
  - Get up slowly from a sitting or lying down position
- Headache, having more dreams or nightmares
  - Speak to your doctor if any of these affect 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:

- Yellowing of skin or eyes, pain in your upper stomach, dark brown urine and/ or pale grey/ clay-coloured stools (signs and symptoms of liver damage)
- Severe muscle ache that is not due to exercise
- Fast, pounding or irregular heartbeat, chest pain
- Blurred vision
- Difficulty passing urine

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

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

Avoid drinking alcohol while taking this medication as it may make you feel very drowsy, worsen your symptoms of depression and increase anxiety. 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 Tianeptine.

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## **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 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.*

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