

PHARMACY

Drug Information

Antidepressants



What are Antidepressants?

- Antidepressants are a group of medication used to treat cognitive (thought related) and biological (body related) symptoms of clinical depression.
- They are also used in a wide range of other clinical conditions such as anxiety disorders, obsessive compulsive disorder, eating disorders, cognitive disorders etc. In some instances, they may be used to improve mood and sleep in general medical conditions.
- Not every antidepressant has the same effect on every person. Therefore, you may be prescribed more than one antidepressant or have your antidepressant medication changed if you do not respond to a particular antidepressant.
- Antidepressants must be taken only after assessment by a clinician, and not be taken prior to medical examination.
- Antidepressants as a group of medication are not habit-forming, or addictive.
- Different classes of Antidepressants:

Medication Class	Medication Name
Tricyclic Antidepressants (TCAs)	Amitriptyline, Clomipramine, Dothiepin, Imipramine, Nortriptyline
Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors (SSRIs)	Escitalopram, Fluoxetine, Fluvoxamine, Paroxetine, Sertraline
Others	Bupropion, Mirtazapine, Moclobemide, Trazodone, Venlafaxine, Duloxetine, Vortioxetine

How are Antidepressants Administered/Taken?

- Antidepressants may be taken with or without food – please refer to individual recommendations when you collect your medication. If you

experience abdominal discomfort or nausea, taking the medication with food will help to minimise it. These side effects will decrease over time as your body will slowly get used to the medication.

- Antidepressants do not work immediately. You may need to take them for several weeks before you feel better. Discuss with your doctor on how to manage your mood or symptoms while waiting for the medication to take effect.
- In order to adequately treat the disorder, you may need to continue a course of Antidepressants for up to six months or more, even after symptoms have eased.
- Thus, it is important that you take your medication regularly, even if you feel well. Do not stop your medication without first consulting your doctor. Most medications require a period of gradual reduction before stopping.
- If you miss a dose, take the missed dose as soon as you remember. If it is almost time for your next dose, wait until then and take only the usual dose. Do not double the dosage.

Can Antidepressants be Administered / Taken With Other Medications?

- Antidepressants can interact with other medications. Please inform your doctor or pharmacist if you are taking other medications, including supplements, traditional or herbal remedies.
- Avoid alcohol while taking antidepressants as alcohol can increase drowsiness or dizziness caused by some antidepressants.
- If you are taking Moclobemide, avoid eating large amounts of tyramine-rich food such as cheese, yeast extract and fermented/preserved products. You will also need to avoid certain cough and cold remedies, hence inform your doctor or pharmacist if you are taking Moclobemide.

What are the Important Side Effects of Antidepressants?

- Side effects can occur with any drug consumption. Contact your doctor if any of these side effects persist or are causing serious pain or discomfort.
- If you are newly started on antidepressant, please inform your doctor immediately if you experience any signs of drug allergies, such as rash, facial swelling or shortness of breath.

Side Effect	Management
Drowsiness or dizziness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not drive or operate machinery. • Get up slowly from sitting or lying position. • Discuss with your doctor regarding moving the timing of the medication to before sleep.
Dry mouth, blurred vision, constipation, difficulty in urination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider sucking on ice chips, sugarless candy or use saliva replacement products to relieve dry mouth. • Ensure sufficient intake of fluid and fibre to prevent constipation.
Nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea, or headache	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider taking medication with food to reduce nausea or vomiting symptoms. • These side effects often ease after a week or so, as the body becomes used to the medication.
Sexual function disturbance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform your doctor.
Weight changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain a healthy diet and exercise regularly. Inform your doctor if weight change is of concern.
Feelings of agitation, anxiety, tremor, restlessness, increased sweating, difficulty sleeping or thoughts of suicide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform your doctor immediately if these symptoms occur.
Feeling of excitement that you cannot control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform your doctor immediately.

Fast heart beat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform your doctor immediately.

Seizures or fits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform your doctor immediately.
Yellowing of skin or eyes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform your doctor immediately.
Blood disorders (unusual bruising / bleeding, fever, sore throat, mouth ulcers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform your doctor immediately.

Are There any Special Precautions That I Need to Take?

- It is important to inform your doctor if you intend to conceive or breastfeed while taking this medication.

How do I Store Antidepressants?

- Store your medication in a cool, dry place away from heat, moisture and direct sunlight.

Please keep all medications out of reach of children.

If you have any problem with your treatment, please contact your doctor, pharmacist or nurse clinician.

