

PURPOSE

Venlafaxine is an antidepressant used to treat symptoms of depression as well as some anxiety disorders, such as obsessive compulsive disorder. Depression is a disorder which goes beyond feelings of “sadness” or “feeling down”. Some symptoms of depression include low mood, feelings of guilt, hopelessness, and worthlessness, significant unintentional weight change, loss of interest, sleep and eating disturbances, low sex drive, poor concentration, and even suicidal thoughts. Although the underlying biochemical cause of depression is poorly understood, at least part of the problem is due to imbalances of neurotransmitters or “messengers” in the brain. It may sometimes be used as a “helper” medication with other antidepressants to optimize therapy.

BENEFITS FROM VENLAFAXINE

The symptoms which Venlafaxine have been found to help with include:

- Depressed or low mood, fatigue, low energy
- Isolation, lack of interest
- Suicidal thoughts

- Loss of appetite and unintentional weight loss

Other Benefits

- Improved sleep
- Reduced irritability and increased calmness
- Improved ability to concentrate on activities
- Decrease in intrusive thoughts and irrational repetitive behaviors

STREET DRUGS OR ALCOHOL WILL DECREASE THE BENEFITS OF VENLAFAXINE AND INCREASE CHANCES OF NEEDING TO BE IN HOSPITAL

BE PATIENT – it takes a while

Venlafaxine will start to help after the first week but may take 4-6 weeks to work. Take this medication ONLY as prescribed by your doctor. DO NOT take more of it, or use it more often than recommended.

DO NOT stop this medication suddenly without consulting your doctor. If you forget to take a dose, you should take it as soon as possible. If it is close to the time of your next dose, you should skip the missed dose and continue with your regular schedule. DO NOT take two doses at once.

POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS OF VENLAFAXINE

- Nausea
- Dizziness
- Problems with ejaculation or attaining orgasm, decreased interest in sex
- Sweating
- Insomnia
- Abnormal sleepiness
- Dry mouth
- Nervousness
- Constipation

Some of these side effects disappear with treatment, while others may not. You may experience other side effects not listed here. Please check with your doctor, nurse or pharmacist if any side effects become bothersome.

Inform your doctor as soon as possible if you develop:

- Dizziness or fainting
- Inability to coordinate movements or jerking movements or severe tremors

PRECAUTIONS

- Always inform your doctor, nurse, pharmacist or dentist about your medication before any treatment
- Since Venlafaxine can interact with other medications, always check with your doctor or

pharmacist before taking any prescription, over-the-counter medications and herbal remedies

- Some people experience drowsiness on Venlafaxine. You should know how you react to the medication before you drive, use hazardous machinery or perform other tasks that require alertness
- Tell your doctor if you are pregnant or breast-feeding before you take this medication
- Consult your doctor before consuming any alcohol while on any medication

STORAGE OF MEDICATION

Store away from heat and direct light. Avoid storing in the bathroom as the heat or moisture may cause the medication to break down

**KEEP OUT OF THE
REACH OF CHILDREN**

RIVERVIEW HOSPITAL
PHARMACY

Approved by the Pharmacy &
Therapeutics Committee
in 2007

**PATIENT
INFORMATION
ON
VENLAFAXINE
(EFFEXOR XR®)**



BC Mental Health &
Addiction Services

An agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority