



# Escitalopram

*What you should know about taking escitalopram (Lexapro)*

Escitalopram is also known by the brand name Lexapro.

Escitalopram is a selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor (SSRI).

Escitalopram is used to treat depression, anxiety, panic, obsessive-compulsive disorder, and post-traumatic stress disorder.

Please contact your provider right away if you are having thoughts of suicide.

## What should my health care provider know before I take this medication?

Alert your provider if you are taking any other medication or if you are pregnant, breastfeeding or plan to become pregnant. Tell your provider if you've ever had bipolar disorder or a manic episode. Also, tell your doctor if you have liver disease.

## How do I take it?

Take this medication exactly as your provider prescribes. It is fine to take this medication with or without food. Do not stop taking this medicine without your provider's approval. You may need to reduce your dosage slowly to avoid withdrawal symptoms.

## What are the possible side effects?

Escitalopram has some side effects that are common only in the first several weeks of starting the medication, until your body adjusts to the medicine. These side effects are likely temporary:

- Feeling nervous.
- Nausea.
- Diarrhea.
- Feeling dizzy or drowsy.

Other possible side effects of escitalopram are more long term such as sexual problems. Some symptoms linked with escitalopram are more serious, but are very rare: suicidal thoughts, mania, blood or bleeding abnormalities.

## When will it start working?

You may start to notice subtle improvement in your symptoms in 2 to 4 weeks, although complete impact of the drug may not be felt for 4 to 8 weeks.

## Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or health care provider if you have questions or concerns. UWMC Clinic staff are also available to help at any time.

Outpatient Psychiatry  
Clinic:  
206-598-7792

After hours or on the weekend, call the UWMC Psychiatry Resident on-call:  
206-598-6190

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## What should I do if I miss a dose?

You should take it as soon as you remember unless it is almost time for the next scheduled dose. In that case, skip the missed dose and take the next one as directed. Do not take double doses.

## When should I call my provider?

Call your provider, get emergency medical care, or call 911 if:

- You are feeling suicidal.
- You are having an allergic reaction to your medication (hives, itching, rash, trouble breathing, tightness in chest, or swelling of your lips, tongue, or throat).
- You have had a seizure.
- You are having serious side effects to your medication.

## Where can I learn more about escitalopram?

- [www.lexapro.com](http://www.lexapro.com)
- Ask your pharmacist or provider.

References: *Micromedex* and *Handbook of Psychiatric Drug Therapy* 4<sup>th</sup> Edition by Arana and Rosenbaum.

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