



Venlafaxine

What you should know about taking venlafaxine (Effexor)

Venlafaxine is also known by the brand names **Effexor** and **Effexor XR**.

Venlafaxine is an antidepressant that can act on both the serotonin and noradrenergic systems.

Venlafaxine is used to treat depression and anxiety.

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 or kidney disease.

How do I take it?

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

What are the possible side effects?

Venlafaxine can cause:

- Drowsiness.
- Nausea.
- Vomiting.
- Weight loss.
- Weakness.
- Constipation.
- Diarrhea.
- Sexual problems.
- Nervousness.
- Dizziness.
- Insomnia (trouble sleeping).
- Tremor.

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

You can expect many of these symptoms to go away as your body gets used to the medicine. Rare, yet serious, symptoms linked with venlafaxine include: mania, liver or bleeding abnormalities, high blood pressure, low sodium in the blood, suicidal thoughts, and seizures.

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.

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 venlafaxine?

- www.effexorxr.com
- Ask your pharmacist or provider.

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

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON
MEDICAL CENTER
UW Medicine

Outpatient Psychiatry

Box 354394
4225 Roosevelt Way N.E., Suite 306
Seattle, WA 98105-6099
206-598-7792