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Effexor

Generic Name: venlafaxine (VEN la fax een)

Brand Names: *Effexor*, *Effexor XR*

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What is Effexor?

Effexor (venlafaxine) is an antidepressant in a group of drugs called selective serotonin and norepinephrine reuptake inhibitors (SSNRIs). Effexor affects chemicals in the brain that may become unbalanced and cause depression.

Effexor is used to treat major depressive disorder, anxiety, and panic disorder.

Effexor may also be used for other purposes not listed in this medication guide.

Important information about Effexor

You should not take Effexor if you are allergic to venlafaxine, or if you are also using a monoamine oxidase inhibitor (MAOI) such as isocarboxazid (Marplan), phenelzine (Nardil), rasagiline (Azilect), selegiline (Eldepryl, Emsam), or tranylcypromine (Parnate). You must wait at least 14 days after stopping an MAOI before you can take Effexor. After you stop taking Effexor, you must wait at least 7 days before you start taking an MAOI.

You may have thoughts about suicide when you first start taking an antidepressant, such as Effexor, especially if you are younger than 24 years old. Your doctor will need to check you at

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regular visits for at least the first 12 weeks of treatment.

Call your doctor at once if you have any new or worsening symptoms such as: mood or behavior changes, anxiety, panic attacks, trouble [sleeping](#), or if you feel impulsive, irritable, agitated, hostile, aggressive, restless, hyperactive (mentally or physically), more depressed, or have thoughts about suicide or hurting yourself. Drinking alcohol can increase certain side effects of Effexor. Do not stop using Effexor suddenly, or you could have unpleasant symptoms. Ask your doctor how to avoid these symptoms when you stop using Effexor.

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Before taking Effexor

You should not take Effexor if you are allergic to venlafaxine, or if you are also using a monoamine oxidase inhibitor (MAOI) such as isocarboxazid (Marplan), phenelzine (Nardil), rasagiline (Azilect), selegiline (Eldepryl, Emsam), or tranylcypromine (Parnate). You must wait at least 14 days after stopping an MAOI before you can take Effexor. After you stop taking Effexor, you must wait at least 7 days before you start taking an MAOI.

Do not take Effexor together with desvenlafaxine (Pristiq).

If you have any of these other conditions, you may need a Effexor dose adjustment or special tests:

- bipolar disorder (manic depression);
- cirrhosis or other liver disease;
- kidney disease;
- [high blood pressure](#);
- glaucoma;
- seizures or epilepsy;
- a bleeding or blood clotting disorder; or
- [high cholesterol](#).

You may have thoughts about suicide when you first start taking an antidepressant, especially if you are younger than 24 years old. Tell your doctor if you have worsening symptoms of depression or suicidal thoughts during the first several weeks of treatment, or whenever your dose is changed.

[Your family](#) or other caregivers should also be alert to changes in your mood or symptoms. Your doctor will need to check you at regular visits for at least the first 12 weeks of treatment.

FDA pregnancy category C. Effexor may be harmful to an unborn baby, and may cause problems in a newborn baby if the [mother](#) takes the medication late in pregnancy (during the third trimester). Tell your doctor if you are pregnant or plan to become pregnant during treatment.

Venlafaxine can pass into breast milk and may harm a nursing baby. Do not use Effexor without telling your doctor if you are breast-feeding a baby. Do not give Effexor to anyone under 18 years old without the advice of a doctor.

See also: [Effexor pregnancy and breastfeeding warnings](#) (in more detail)

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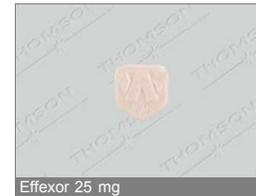
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How should I take Effexor?

Take Effexor exactly as prescribed by your doctor. Do not take in larger or smaller amounts or for longer than recommended. Follow the directions on your prescription label.

Take this medication with a full glass of water. Effexor should be taken with food. Try to take Effexor at the same time each day. Swallow the controlled-release capsule (Effexor XR) whole, without crushing or chewing. To make the medication easier to swallow, you may open the Effexor XR capsule and sprinkle the medicine into a small amount of applesauce. Swallow all of the mixture without chewing, and do not save any for later use. It may take 4 weeks or more for your symptoms to improve. Keep using the medication as directed and tell your doctor if your symptoms do not improve after 4 weeks of treatment. Do not stop using Effexor suddenly, or you could have unpleasant symptoms. Ask your doctor how to avoid these symptoms when you stop using Effexor.

Store Effexor at room temperature away from moisture and heat.

What happens if I miss a dose?

Take the missed dose as soon as you remember. Skip the missed dose if it is almost time for your next scheduled dose. Do not take extra medicine to make up the missed dose.

What happens if I overdose?

Seek emergency medical attention or call the Poison Help line at 1-800-222-1222.

Overdose symptoms may include vomiting, fast [heart rate](#), blurred vision, extreme drowsiness, or seizure (convulsions).

What should I avoid while taking Effexor?

Avoid drinking alcohol, which can increase some of the side effects of Effexor. Venlafaxine may impair your thinking or reactions. Be careful if you drive or do anything that requires you to be alert.

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Help and Support

Looking for answers? [Ask a question](#) or go join the [Effexor support group](#) to connect with others who have similar interests.

Effexor side effects

Get emergency medical help if you have any of these signs of an allergic reaction to Effexor: skin rash or hives; [difficulty breathing](#); swelling of your face, lips, tongue, or throat.

Report any new or worsening symptoms to your doctor, such as: mood or behavior changes, anxiety, panic attacks, trouble sleeping, or if you feel impulsive, irritable, agitated, hostile,

aggressive, restless, hyperactive (mentally or physically), more depressed, or have thoughts about suicide or hurting yourself.

Call your doctor at once if you have a serious Effexor side effect such as:

- seizure (convulsions);
- very stiff (rigid) muscles, high fever, [sweating](#), confusion, fast or uneven heartbeats, tremors, feeling like you might pass out;
- agitation, hallucinations, fever, fast heart rate, overactive reflexes, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, loss of coordination;
- headache, trouble concentrating, memory problems, weakness, feeling unsteady, confusion, hallucinations, fainting, shallow breathing or breathing that stops;
- cough, chest tightness, [trouble breathing](#); or
- easy bruising.

Less serious Effexor side effects may include:

- drowsiness, dizziness, feeling nervous;
- strange dreams;
- increased sweating;
- blurred vision;
- dry mouth;
- changes in appetite or weight;
- mild nausea, constipation; or
- decreased [sex drive](#), impotence, or difficulty having an orgasm.

This is not a complete list of side effects and others may occur. Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects. You may report side effects to FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.

See also: [Effexor side effects](#) (in more detail)

What other drugs will affect Effexor?

Before using Effexor, tell your doctor if you regularly use other medicines that make you sleepy (such as [cold or allergy](#) medicine, sedatives, narcotic pain medicine, sleeping pills, muscle relaxers, and medicine for seizures or anxiety). They can add to sleepiness caused by Effexor.

Ask your doctor before taking any medicine for pain, arthritis, fever, or swelling. This includes aspirin, ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin), naproxen (Aleve, Naprosyn), diclofenac (Voltaren), indomethacin, piroxicam (Feldene), nabumetone (Relafen), etodolac (Lodine), and others. Taking any of these drugs with Effexor may cause you to bruise or bleed easily.

Tell your doctor about all other medications you use, especially:

- cimetidine (Tagamet, Tagamet HB);
- ketoconazole (Nizoral);
- linezolid (Zyvox);
- lithium (Eskalith, LithoBid);
- haloperidol (Haldol) or risperidone (Risperdal);
- tramadol (Ultram, Ultracet);
- tryptophan (sometimes called L-tryptophan);
- warfarin (Coumadin);
- almotriptan (Axert), frovatriptan (Frova), sumatriptan (Imitrex), naratriptan (Amerge), rizatriptan (Maxalt), or zolmitriptan (Zomig); or
- any other antidepressants such as amitriptyline (Elavil), amoxapine (Asendin), citalopram (Celexa), clomipramine (Anafranil), desipramine (Norpramin), escitalopram (Lexapro), fluoxetine (Prozac), fluvoxamine (Luvox), imipramine (Tofranil), nortriptyline (Pamelor), paroxetine (Paxil), protriptyline (Vivactil), sertraline (Zoloft), or trimipramine (Surmontil).

This list is not complete and there are many other drugs that can interact with Effexor. Tell your

doctor about all medications you use. This includes prescription, over-the-counter, vitamin, and herbal products. Do not start a new medication without telling your doctor.

More Effexor resources

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Where can I get more information?

- Your pharmacist can provide more information about Effexor.

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