



Zoloft

Generic Name: sertraline (SER tra leen)

Brand Names: *Zoloft*

What is Zoloft?

Zoloft (sertraline) is an **antidepressant** in a group of drugs called **selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors** (SSRIs). The way sertraline works is still not fully understood. It is thought to positively affect communication between nerve cells in the central nervous system and/or restore chemical balance in the brain.

Zoloft is used to treat depression, **obsessive-compulsive disorder**, panic disorder, anxiety disorders, **post-traumatic stress disorder** (PTSD), and **premenstrual dysphoric disorder** (PMDD).

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

Important information

You should not use Zoloft if you also take pimozide, or if you are being treated with methylene blue injection.

Do not use Zoloft if you have taken a **MAO inhibitor** in the past 14 days. A dangerous drug interaction could occur. MAO inhibitors include isocarboxazid, linezolid, phenelzine, rasagiline, selegiline, and tranylcypromine.

Some young people have thoughts about suicide when first taking an antidepressant. Stay alert to changes in your mood or symptoms. Report any new or worsening symptoms to your doctor.

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.

Do not give Zoloft to anyone younger than 18 years old without the advice of a doctor. Zoloft is FDA-approved for children with obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD). It is not approved for treating depression in children.

Before taking this medicine

You should not use Zoloft if you are allergic to sertraline, if you also take pimozide, or if you are being treated with methylene blue injection.

Do not use Zoloft if you have taken an MAO inhibitor in the past 14 days. A dangerous drug interaction could occur. MAO inhibitors include isocarboxazid, linezolid, phenelzine, rasagiline, selegiline, and tranylcypromine. After you stop taking Zoloft, you must wait at least 14 days before you start taking an MAOI.

To make sure Zoloft is safe for you, tell your doctor if you have:

- liver or kidney disease;
- seizures or epilepsy;
- a bleeding or blood clotting disorder;
- bipolar disorder (manic depression); or
- a history of drug abuse or suicidal thoughts.

Some young people have thoughts about suicide when first taking an antidepressant. Your doctor should check your progress at regular visits. Your family or other caregivers should also be alert to changes in your mood or symptoms.

Taking an SSRI antidepressant during pregnancy may cause serious lung problems or other complications in the baby. However, you may have a relapse of depression if you stop taking your antidepressant. Tell your doctor right away if you become pregnant. **Do not start or stop taking Zoloft during pregnancy without your doctor's advice.**

It is not known whether sertraline passes into breast milk or if it could harm a nursing baby. Tell your doctor if you are breast-feeding a baby.

Do not give Zoloft to anyone younger than 18 years old without the advice of a doctor. Zoloft is FDA-approved for children with obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD). It is not approved for treating depression in children.

How should I take Zoloft?

Take Zoloft exactly as prescribed by your doctor. Follow all directions on your prescription label. Your doctor may occasionally change your dose to make sure you get the best results. Do not take this medicine in larger or smaller amounts or for longer than recommended.

Zoloft may be taken with or without food. Try to take the medicine at the same time each day.

The liquid (oral concentrate) form of Zoloft must be diluted before you take it. To be sure you get the correct dose, measure the liquid with the medicine dropper provided. Mix the dose with 4 ounces (one-half cup) of water, ginger ale, lemon/lime soda, lemonade, or orange juice. Do not use any other liquids to dilute the medicine. Stir this mixture and drink all of it right away. To make sure you get the entire dose, add a little more water to the same glass, swirl gently and drink right away.

Zoloft can cause you to have a false positive drug screening test. If you provide a urine sample for drug screening, tell the laboratory staff that you are taking Zoloft.

It may take up to 4 weeks before your symptoms improve. Keep using the medication as directed and tell your doctor if your symptoms do not improve.

Do not stop using Zoloft suddenly, or you could have unpleasant withdrawal symptoms. Ask your doctor how to safely stop using Zoloft.

Store at room temperature away from moisture and heat.

See also: Dosage Information (in more detail)

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.

What should I avoid while taking Zoloft?

Ask your doctor before taking a nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID) for pain, arthritis, fever, or swelling. This includes aspirin, ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin), naproxen (Aleve), celecoxib (Celebrex), diclofenac, indomethacin, meloxicam, and others. Using an NSAID with Zoloft may cause you to bruise or bleed easily.

Drinking alcohol can increase certain side effects of Zoloft. Do not take the liquid form of Zoloft if you are taking disulfiram (Antabuse). Liquid Zoloft may contain alcohol and you could have a severe reaction to the disulfiram.

This medication may impair your thinking or reactions. Be careful if you drive or do anything that requires you to be alert.

Zoloft side effects

Get emergency medical help if you have **signs of an allergic reaction to Zoloft**: skin rash or hives (with or without fever or joint pain); 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 seizure (convulsions);
- high levels of serotonin in the body - agitation, hallucinations, fever, fast heart rate, overactive reflexes, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, loss of coordination, fainting;
- low levels of sodium in the body - headache, confusion, slurred speech, severe weakness, vomiting, loss of coordination, feeling unsteady; or
- manic episodes - racing thoughts, increased energy, unusual risk-taking behavior, extreme happiness, being irritable or talkative.

Common Zoloft side effects may include:

- drowsiness, dizziness, tired feeling;
- mild nausea, stomach pain, upset stomach, constipation;
- dry mouth;
- changes in appetite or weight;
- sleep problems (insomnia); 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: Side effects (in more detail)

Zoloft dosing information

Usual Adult Dose of Zoloft for Depression:

Initial dose: 50 mg orally once a day

Maintenance Dose: 50 to 200 mg orally once a day

Comments:

-Dose adjustments may be made at intervals of at least one week.

-Obsessive Compulsive Disorder and acute episodes of Major Depressive Disorder require several months or longer of sustained pharmacologic therapy.

Usual Adult Dose of Zoloft for Obsessive Compulsive Disorder:

Initial dose: 50 mg orally once a day

Maintenance Dose: 50 to 200 mg orally once a day

Comments:

-Dose adjustments may be made at intervals of at least one week.

-Obsessive Compulsive Disorder and acute episodes of Major Depressive Disorder require several months or longer of sustained pharmacologic therapy.

Usual Adult Dose of Zoloft for Panic Disorder:

Initial dose: 25 mg orally once a day, increased after one week to 50 mg orally once a day

Maintenance dose: 50 to 200 mg orally once a day

Comments:

- Dose adjustments may be made at intervals of at least one week.
- These conditions generally required several months or longer of sustained pharmacological therapy beyond initial treatment.

Usual Adult Dose of Zoloft for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder:

Initial dose: 25 mg orally once a day, increased after one week to 50 mg orally once a day

Maintenance dose: 50 to 200 mg orally once a day

Comments:

- Dose adjustments may be made at intervals of at least one week.
- These conditions generally required several months or longer of sustained pharmacological therapy beyond initial treatment.

Usual Adult Dose of Zoloft for Social Anxiety Disorder:

Initial dose: 25 mg orally once a day, increased after one week to 50 mg orally once a day

Maintenance dose: 50 to 200 mg orally once a day

Comments:

- Dose adjustments may be made at intervals of at least one week.
- These conditions generally required several months or longer of sustained pharmacological therapy beyond initial treatment.

Usual Adult Dose for Premenstrual Dysphoric Disorder:**Continuous regimen:**

Initial dose: 50 mg orally once a day during the menstrual cycle

Maintenance dose: 50 to 150 mg orally once a day during the menstrual cycle

Cyclic regimen:

Initial dose: 50 mg orally once a day starting 14 days prior to the anticipated start of menstruation through to the first full day of menses, and repeated with each new cycle

Maintenance dose: 50 to 100 mg orally once a day

Comments:

- The dose may be increased in increments of 50 mg per menstrual cycle, increased at the onset of each new cycle; dosage adjustments may also include changes between regimens.
- If a 100 mg once daily dose has been established with the cyclic regimen, a titration step of 50 mg per day for three days should be used at the beginning of each dosing period (luteal phase of the menstrual cycle).
- The effectiveness of sertraline for longer than three months has not been systematically evaluated in controlled trials.

Usual Pediatric Dose of Zoloft for Obsessive Compulsive Disorder:**6 to 12 years:**

Initial dose: 25 mg orally once a day

Maintenance dose: 25 to 200 mg orally once a day

13 to 17 years:

Initial dose: 50 mg orally once a day

Maintenance dose: 50 to 200 mg orally once a day

Comments:

- The dose may be increased at intervals of at least one week.
- The potential risks versus clinical need should be assessed prior to using this drug in children and adolescents.

What other drugs will affect Zoloft?

Taking Zoloft with other drugs that make you sleepy or slow your breathing can increase these effects. Ask your doctor before taking Zoloft with a sleeping pill, narcotic pain medicine, muscle relaxer, or medicine for anxiety or seizures.

Tell your doctor about all your current medicines and any you start or stop using, especially:

- any other antidepressant;
- cimetidine;
- phenytoin;
- St. John's wort;
- tolbutamide;
- tramadol;
- tryptophan (sometimes called L-tryptophan);
- a blood thinner - warfarin, Coumadin, Jantoven;
- heart rhythm medicine - digoxin, flecainide, propafenone, and others;
- medicine to treat anxiety, mood disorders, or mental illness such as schizophrenia - diazepam, lithium, valproate, and others; or
- migraine headache medicines - sumatriptan, zolmitriptan, and others.

This list is not complete. Other drugs may interact with sertraline, including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal products. Not all possible interactions are listed in this medication guide.

Where can I get more information?

- Your pharmacist can provide more information about Zoloft.
- Remember, keep this and all other medicines out of the reach of children, never share your medicines with others, and use Zoloft only for the indication prescribed.
- Disclaimer: Every effort has been made to ensure that the information provided is accurate, up-to-date, and complete, but no guarantee is made to that effect. Multum's drug information is an informational resource designed to assist licensed healthcare practitioners in caring for their patients and/or to serve consumers viewing this service as a supplement to, and not a substitute for, the expertise, skill, knowledge and judgment of healthcare practitioners. The information contained herein is not intended to cover all possible uses, directions, precautions, warnings, drug interactions, allergic reactions, or adverse effects. If you have questions about the drugs you are taking, check with your doctor, nurse or pharmacist.

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