

What is most important to remember?

- It may take a few weeks for you to see the benefits of taking this medicine
- Do not suddenly stop taking venlafaxine unless directed to do so by your doctor
- Seek help from a doctor or pharmacist if you have thoughts of suicide or hurting yourself
- Contact your prescriber immediately if you experience any itching or rash, or swelling of the face, lips, tongue or throat
- Do not start any new medications, over-the-counter drugs or herbal remedies without talking to your doctor
- If you think there has been an overdose, call your poison control center or get medical care right away

If you have questions:

Ask your doctor, nurse or pharmacist for more information about venlafaxine (Effexor®, Effexor XR®).

Strong Internal Medicine



Strong Internal Medicine
601 Elmwood Avenue
Ambulatory Care Facility, 5th Floor
Rochester, NY 14642
Phone: (585) 275 7424

Visit our website at:
[www.urmc.rochester.edu/medicine/
general-medicine/patientcare/](http://www.urmc.rochester.edu/medicine/general-medicine/patientcare/)

Venlafaxine (Effexor®, Effexor XR®): Important Patient Information





What does venlafaxine do?

- It is in a class of medications called selective serotonin and norepinephrine reuptake inhibitors (SNRIs). It works by increasing the amount of serotonin and norepinephrine in the brain that help maintain mental balance and stop the movement of pain signals in the brain
- It is used to treat low mood (depression); anxiety; post-traumatic stress; hot flashes; diabetic nerve pain; and ease long-term pain problems

How should venlafaxine be used?

- For best results, do not miss any doses
- Take with food to avoid upset stomach
- If you take the long-acting capsules swallow them whole. Do not crush, chew, or break
- You may open the long-acting capsule and sprinkle on applesauce. Do not chew the beads

Who should know I am taking venlafaxine?

- Keep a list of all your medicines (prescription, natural products, supplements, vitamins, over-the-counter) and give it to your healthcare provider (doctor, nurse, nurse practitioner, pharmacist, or physician assistant)

If you have any of the following side effects, call your doctor or visit the emergency room immediately:

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| • If you are planning to hurt yourself | • Trouble breathing |
| • Change in thinking clearly | • Itching or rash |
| • Feeling very tired or weak | • Swelling of face, lips, tongue or throat |
| • Chest pain or pressure | • Twitching, agitation, sweating a lot, and muscle stiffness |
| • Very upset stomach or throwing up | • Very excitable and nervous |
| • Any bruising or bleeding | • A heartbeat that does not feel normal |
| • Big change in balance | • Very fast heartbeat |

What side effects could occur with venlafaxine?

- Dry mouth
- Nervous and excitable
- Headache
- Feeling lightheaded or sleepy
- Upset stomach or throwing up (having small meals may help)
- Hard stools (constipation)

What should I do if I miss a dose?

- Take your dose as soon as you think about it
- If it is close to the time for your next dose, skip the missed dose and go back to your normal dose time
- Do not take 2 doses at the same time or extra doses
- Do not change the dose or stop this medicine unless directed by your doctor

Are there any interactions with other drugs that I need to worry about?

- There are many drug interactions that may increase your risk of side effects
- Do not start new prescription, over-the-counter medicines, or herbal and dietary supplements without telling your doctor

What are some things that I need to be aware of when taking venlafaxine?

- Tell your doctor or pharmacist if you are allergic to venlafaxine, or any other medicines, foods, or substances
 - It may take a few weeks for you to see the benefits of taking this medicine. Do not suddenly stop taking venlafaxine unless directed to do so by your doctor
 - Do not take venlafaxine if you have taken other medicines for depression such as MAOIs (phenelzine, tranylcypromine) or drugs for Parkinson's disease (selegiline or rasagiline) in the last 14 days. Taking those drugs with venlafaxine can cause dangerous high blood pressure. If you are not sure, ask your doctor or pharmacist
 - Call your doctor right away if you have dizziness, very bad headache, agitation, hallucinations, fever, fast heartbeat, a heartbeat that does not feel normal, flushing, seizures, shakiness, sweating a lot, change in balance, change in thinking clearly with logic, very bad upset stomach and throwing up, or very bad loose stools. These are signs of a rare but serious problem called serotonin syndrome. The risk may be greater if you take venlafaxine with certain other medicines. Talk with your doctor or pharmacist
 - Talk with your doctor if you have seizures, high blood pressure kidney or liver disease
 - Talk with your doctor before using products like aspirin, blood thinners, garlic, ginseng, ginkgo, ibuprofen (or like products) for pain medicine, or vitamin E
 - Talk with your doctor if you are pregnant, plan to get pregnant, or are breastfeeding. You will need to talk about the benefits and risks of using this medication
 - Avoid drinking alcohol (includes wine, beer, and liquor) or other drugs and natural products that slow your actions
 - Store a cool, dry place out of reach of children and pets
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