

Medication Information

Effexor

Effexor (venlafaxine HCL) is a medication used to treat depression and various anxiety disorders. The usual daily dose is between 75 and 375 mg, and it may take 2-4 weeks before the full effects are noticed.

Precautions: Effexor must be taken on a regular basis to be of benefit. Stopping it abruptly may cause withdrawal symptoms, so slow tapering is recommended. Because this medication can cause drowsiness and dizziness, do not drive or operate heavy machinery until you know how you will be affected. It is best to avoid any use of alcohol or street drugs when taking this medication. If there is a possibility you may become pregnant or breast feed, consult with your physician. Effexor should not be taken within 14 days of treatment with a monoamine oxidase inhibitor (MAOI), and it may interact with Tagamet. People who have high blood pressure or liver disease or are elderly may experience more adverse effects. Occasionally, children and young adults treated with antidepressants may experience the onset or worsening of suicidal thoughts and impulses.

Common side effects include: nausea, sleepiness, dry mouth, dizziness, constipation, nervousness, sweating, weakness, sexual dysfunction, and loss of appetite. At higher doses, some patients may experience agitation or develop elevated blood pressure. Other adverse effects not listed here may occur. Contact your physician if you develop any unusual or disturbing symptoms.

Alternate Treatments: Other medications to treat depression include selective serotonin inhibitors (SSRIs), Wellbutrin, Remeron, trazodone, Cymbalta, tricyclic antidepressants, and MAOIs. Electric convulsive therapy (ECT) is often effective in severe depression resistant to medication treatment. Other medications to treat anxiety include benzodiazepines, SSRIs, and Buspar. Certain "natural" substances have been found helpful in some people with milder depression and anxiety. These are not as well studied, are often manufactured with less quality control than medications, can cause adverse reactions, and are usually less predictably effective than medication. They include St John's Wort, DL phenylalanine, SAMe, 5-HTP, GABA, L-glutamine, Valerian root, and Kava Kava. Various forms of psychotherapy are also often beneficial. Left untreated, depressive and anxiety disorders tend to become more severe and chronic.