

## What is this medicine for?

Venlafaxine belongs to a group of antidepressants known as serotonin norepinephrine reuptake inhibitor (SNRI).

Venlafaxine is used to treat symptoms of depression (low mood) such as sad feelings or feelings of hopelessness, poor energy or appetite, or feeling bad about yourself.

It may also be used to treat symptoms of generalized anxiety disorder, social phobia, and panic disorder.

Venlafaxine may be used for other conditions, check with your doctor.

## Before using this medicine:

Tell your doctor if you have or have ever had bipolar disorder or mania (abnormally high or excited mood, or excessive activity and energy); high blood pressure; heart, kidney or liver disease; seizures (fits); narrow angle glaucoma (increased eye pressure); mineral imbalance (such as low sodium in the blood); bleeding problems; drug allergies; or if you are taking or have been taking other antidepressants in the past 2 weeks.

**FOR WOMEN: Tell your doctor if you are pregnant, plan to become pregnant, or are breast-feeding.**

## How to use this medicine?

Follow the directions on your medicine label and take the medicine exactly as directed. Do not take more or less of it or take it more often than prescribed by your doctor.

Venlafaxine should be taken with or after food.

This medicine must be taken regularly for a few weeks before your symptoms of low mood or anxiety gradually improve.

Once these symptoms are under control, you should continue taking this medication regularly to prevent the return of your depressive or anxiety symptoms. Do check with your doctor on the appropriate length of treatment you need.

Do not stop taking it without talking to your doctor, otherwise your condition may worsen very quickly. Stopping this medicine suddenly after taking it for a long time may lead to mild discontinuation symptoms such as dizziness, headache, agitation, anxiety, difficulty sleeping and nausea.

For Venlafaxine extended-release capsule/tablet: Swallow the capsule/tablet whole. Do not crush, chew or open it.

## Precautions while taking this medicine:

- Venlafaxine may make you drowsy or less alert. Do not drive or operate machinery if affected.
- Avoid drinking alcohol while taking this medicine. Drinking alcohol can worsen symptoms of depression.
- Your mental condition may change in unexpected ways especially at the beginning (first few weeks) of treatment and during dose changes. Contact your doctor immediately if you or your child (the patient) experience new or worsening thoughts of harming yourself, increase in symptoms such as anxiety, restlessness, violent behaviour, or other changes in mood and behaviour. Be sure that your family or caregiver knows which symptoms may be serious so they can call the doctor if you are unable to seek treatment on your own.

- Venlafaxine may sometimes worsen blood pressure control. Maintain regular check-ups with your doctor.
- When you take this medicine with some other medicines, it may affect how they work. Be sure that you tell all doctors, pharmacists, dentists and other health care providers who treat you about all medicines and natural remedies you are taking.

## What should I do if I forget a dose?

Take the missed dose as soon as you remember it. However, if it is more than half way between the doses, skip the missed dose and take your medicine at the usual time.

**Do not take two doses at the same time to make up for a missed one.**

## Possible Side Effects

Like all medications, this medication may also cause some POSSIBLE side effects in some people. Everyone responds differently to medications; so not everyone experiences any or all of them.

**COMMON** (Generally affect up to 10% of patients)

*Most of these side effects below will get better or go away completely with continued medication taking as your body gets used to this medication. Contact your doctor or pharmacist should they become too bothersome to you.*

- ~ Nausea or vomiting
- ~ Headache
- ~ Dry mouth (suck ice chips or sugarless candy if necessary)
- ~ Difficulty sleeping,
- ~ Dizziness (can be reduced by getting up slowly from a sitting or lying down position)
- ~ Loss of appetite, weight loss
- ~ Nervousness
- ~ Constipation (drink more fluids, regular exercise, take fibre-rich diet, or talk to the doctor about stool softeners or laxatives.)

**FOR URGENT ATTENTION**

**Check with your doctor as soon as possible if you have any of the following:**

- ~ Allergic reaction: Skin rash or itching, difficulty breathing, swelling of eyes/face/lips
- ~ Unusual behaviour or thoughts of hurting yourself or others
- ~ Seizures (fits)
- ~ Severe weakness, uncontrolled movements or twitching of muscles
- ~ Blurred vision
- ~ Fast or uneven heartbeat, chest pain
- ~ Unusual bruising or bleeding

If you have any concerns about your medications or if you have other side effects that you think are caused by this medicine, please consult with your doctor or pharmacist.

**Where should I store the medicine?**

Store this medicine at room temperature, away from direct light, heat and moisture (not in the bathroom) and out of reach of children.  
Throw away any medication that is expired or no longer needed.

***Do not share the medicine with other people.***

***Ask your doctor or pharmacist for more information or if you have any questions.***

**Institute of Mental Health**

**Pharmacy Department**

10 Buangkok View  
Singapore 539747

*For medication enquiries: (during office hours)*

IMH Clinic B/ Sayang Wellness Pharmacy: 63892077

IMH Clinic C (NAMS) Pharmacy: 63893666

Community Wellness Centre Pharmacy: 64715797

Geylang Behavioural Medicine Pharmacy: 67461724

Child Guidance Clinic (HPB) Pharmacy: 64353807

Child Guidance (Sunrise Wing) Pharmacy: 63892410

Email: [enquiry@imh.com.sg](mailto:enquiry@imh.com.sg)



*Patient Information Leaflet on*

**VENLAFAXINE**

