Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

# Armodafinil

This information from Lexicomp® explains what you need to know about this medication, including what it's used for, how to take it, its side effects, and when to call your healthcare provider.

## Brand Names: US

Nuvigil

## What is this drug used for?

- It is used to treat a lot of sleepiness that may happen with sleep apnea, narcolepsy, or shift work problems.
- It may be given to you for other reasons. Talk with the doctor.

## What do I need to tell my doctor BEFORE I take this drug?

- If you are allergic to this drug; any part of this drug; or any other drugs, foods, or substances. Tell your doctor about the allergy and what signs you had.
- If you have heart problems.
- If you have heart valve problems.

This is not a list of all drugs or health problems that interact with this drug.

Tell your doctor and pharmacist about all of your drugs (prescription or OTC, natural products, vitamins) and health problems. You must check to make sure that it is safe for you to take this drug with all of your drugs and health problems. Do not start, stop, or change the dose of any drug without checking with your doctor.

## What are some things I need to know or do while I take this drug?

- Tell all of your health care providers that you take this drug. This includes your doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and dentists.
- This drug is not a cure for sleep problems and does not replace sleep. Stay under the care of your doctor.
- Avoid driving and doing other tasks or actions that call for you to be alert until you see how this drug affects you. You may also need to avoid doing these things if you do not feel awake enough after taking this drug. If you still feel sleepy after taking this drug, talk with your doctor.
- This drug may be abused and may lead to dependence. Lowering the dose or stopping this drug all of a sudden may raise the risk of seizures or withdrawal. Talk to your doctor before you lower the dose or stop this drug. Get medical help right away if you have a seizure or other bad effects.
- Check blood pressure and heart rate as the doctor has told you.
- Avoid drinking alcohol while taking this drug.
- Talk with your doctor before you use marijuana, other forms of cannabis, or prescription or OTC drugs that may slow your actions.
- Limit your use of caffeine (for example, tea, coffee, cola) and chocolate. Use with this drug may cause nervousness, shakiness, and a fast heartbeat.
- Mental or mood problems like depression and suicidal thoughts have happened with this drug. Sometimes, people needed to get treated in a hospital. If you have ever had any mental or mood problems, talk with your doctor.
- If you are 65 or older, use this drug with care. You could have more side effects.
- This drug is not approved for use in children. Very bad rashes have happened in children. Talk with the doctor.

- Birth control pills and other hormone-based birth control may not work as well to prevent pregnancy. Use some other kind of birth control also, like a condom, when taking this drug and for 1 month after the last dose.
- Tell your doctor if you are pregnant, plan on getting pregnant, or are breast-feeding. You will need to talk about the benefits and risks to you and the baby.

## What are some side effects that I need to call my doctor about right away?

**WARNING/CAUTION:** Even though it may be rare, some people may have very bad and sometimes deadly side effects when taking a drug. Tell your doctor or get medical help right away if you have any of the following signs or symptoms that may be related to a very bad side effect:

- Signs of an allergic reaction, like rash; hives; itching; red, swollen, blistered, or peeling skin with or without fever; wheezing; tightness in the chest or throat; trouble breathing, swallowing, or talking; unusual hoarseness; or swelling of the mouth, face, lips, tongue, or throat.
- Signs of heart problems like chest pain; fast, slow, or abnormal heartbeat; or shortness of breath, a big weight gain, or swelling in the arms or legs.
- Signs of high blood pressure like very bad headache or dizziness, passing out, or change in eyesight.
- Signs of depression, suicidal thoughts, emotional ups and downs, abnormal thinking, anxiety, or lack of interest in life.
- Hallucinations (seeing or hearing things that are not there).
- Change in how you act.
- Feeling nervous and excitable.
- Feeling confused.
- Dark urine or yellow skin or eyes.
- Not able to pass urine or change in how much urine is passed.

- Fever, chills, or sore throat; any unexplained bruising or bleeding; or feeling very tired or weak.
- Muscle or joint pain.
- Diarrhea.
- Severe skin reactions may happen with this drug. These include Stevens-Johnson syndrome (SJS), toxic epidermal necrolysis (TEN), and other serious reactions. Sometimes, body organs may also be affected. These reactions can be deadly. Get medical help right away if you have signs like red, swollen, blistered, or peeling skin; red or irritated eyes; sores in your mouth, throat, nose, eyes, genitals, or any areas of skin; fever; chills; body aches; shortness of breath; or swollen glands.

## What are some other side effects of this drug?

All drugs may cause side effects. However, many people have no side effects or only have minor side effects. Call your doctor or get medical help if any of these side effects or any other side effects bother you or do not go away:

- Dizziness or headache.
- Upset stomach.
- Trouble sleeping.
- Dry mouth.

These are not all of the side effects that may occur. If you have questions about side effects, call your doctor. Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects.

You may report side effects to your national health agency.

You may report side effects to the FDA at 1-800-332-1088. You may also report side effects at https://www.fda.gov/medwatch.

## How is this drug best taken?

Use this drug as ordered by your doctor. Read all information given to you. Follow all instructions closely.

- Take with or without food.
- If taken with food, this drug may take longer to work.
- If taking for a shift work sleep problem, take 1 hour before the start of work.
- If taking for narcolepsy, sleep apnea, or other health problem, take this drug in the morning if taking once daily. To prevent sleep problems, avoid taking this drug late in the day.

## What do I do if I miss a dose?

- Take a missed dose as soon as you think about it.
- If it is near bedtime, skip the missed dose and go back to your normal time.
- Do not take 2 doses at the same time or extra doses.

## How do I store and/or throw out this drug?

- Store at room temperature in a dry place. Do not store in a bathroom.
- Store this drug in a safe place where children cannot see or reach it, and where other people cannot get to it. A locked box or area may help keep this drug safe. Keep all drugs away from pets.
- Throw away unused or expired drugs. Do not flush down a toilet or pour down a drain unless you are told to do so. Check with your pharmacist if you have questions about the best way to throw out drugs. There may be drug take-back programs in your area.

## General drug facts

- If your symptoms or health problems do not get better or if they become worse, call your doctor.
- Do not share your drugs with others and do not take anyone else's drugs.
- Some drugs may have another patient information leaflet. If you have any questions about this drug, please talk with your doctor, nurse, pharmacist, or other health care provider.
- This drug comes with an extra patient fact sheet called a Medication Guide. Read it with care. Read it again each time this drug is refilled. If you have any questions about this drug, please talk with the doctor, pharmacist, or other health care provider.
- If you think there has been an overdose, call your poison control center or get medical care right away. Be ready to tell or show what was taken, how much, and when it happened.

## Consumer Information Use and Disclaimer

This generalized information is a limited summary of diagnosis, treatment, and/or medication information. It is not meant to be comprehensive and should be used as a tool to help the user understand and/or assess potential diagnostic and treatment options. It does NOT include all information about conditions, treatments, medications, side effects, or risks that may apply to a specific patient. It is not intended to be medical advice or a substitute for the medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment of a health care provider based on the health care provider's examination and assessment of a patient's specific and unique circumstances. Patients must speak with a health care provider for complete information about their health, medical questions, and treatment options, including any risks or benefits regarding use of medications. This information does not endorse any treatments or medications as safe, effective, or approved for treating a specific patient. UpToDate, Inc. and its affiliates disclaim any warranty or liability relating to this information or the use thereof. The use of this information is governed by the Terms of Use, available at https://www.wolterskluwer.com/en/know/clinical-effectiveness-terms.

## Last Reviewed Date

2022-05-19

## Copyright

© 2024 UpToDate, Inc. and its affiliates and/or licensors. All rights reserved.

If you have any questions, contact a member of your care team directly. If you're a patient at MSK and you need to reach a provider after 5 p.m., during the weekend, or on a holiday, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit www.mskcc.org/pe to search our virtual library.

Armodafinil - Last updated on December 12, 2022
All rights owned and reserved by Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center