Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Bupropion

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

Aplenzin; Forfivo XL; Wellbutrin SR; Wellbutrin XL

Brand Names: Canada

MYLAN-BuPROPion XL [DSC]; ODAN Bupropion SR; TARO-Bupropion XL; TEVA-Bupropion XL; Wellbutrin SR; Wellbutrin XL; Zyban

Warning

- Drugs like this one have raised the chance of suicidal thoughts or actions in children and young adults. The risk may be greater in people who have had these thoughts or actions in the past. All people who take this drug need to be watched closely. Call the doctor right away if signs like depression, nervousness, restlessness, grouchiness, panic attacks, or changes in mood or actions are new or worse. Call the doctor right away if any thoughts or actions of suicide occur.

What is this drug used for?

- It is used to treat depression.
- It is used to prevent seasonal affective disorder (SAD).

- It is used to help you stop smoking.
- 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 ever had seizures.
- If you drink a lot of alcohol and you stop drinking all of a sudden.
- If you use certain other drugs like drugs for seizures or anxiety and you stop using them all of a sudden.
- If you have ever had an eating problem like anorexia or bulimia.
- If you have any of these health problems: Kidney disease or liver disease.
- If you have taken certain drugs for depression or Parkinson’s disease in the last 14 days. This includes isocarboxazid, phenelzine, tranylcypromine, selegiline, or rasagiline. Very high blood pressure may happen.
- If you are taking any of these drugs: Clopidogrel, linezolid, methylene blue, or ticlopidine.
- If you are taking another drug that has the same drug in it.

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?

For all patients taking this drug:

- Tell all of your health care providers that you take this drug. This includes your doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and dentists.
- Avoid driving and doing other tasks or actions that call for you to be alert or have clear eyesight until you see how this drug affects you.
- This drug may affect certain lab tests. Tell all of your health care providers and lab workers that you take this drug.
- Do not stop taking this drug all of a sudden without calling your doctor. You may have a greater risk of side effects. If you need to stop this drug, you will want to slowly stop it as ordered by your doctor.
- High blood pressure has happened with this drug. Have your blood pressure checked as you have been told by your doctor.
- This drug may raise the chance of seizures. The risk may be higher in people who take higher doses, have certain health problems, or take certain other drugs. People who suddenly stop drinking a lot of alcohol or suddenly stop taking certain drugs (like drugs used for anxiety, sleep, or seizures) may also have a higher risk. Talk to your doctor to see if you have a greater chance of seizures.
- 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.
- It may take several weeks to see the full effects.
- This drug is not approved for use in children. Talk with the doctor.
- If you are 65 or older, use this drug with care. You could have more side effects.
- 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.

If you smoke:

- Not all products are approved for use to help stop smoking. Talk with the doctor to make sure that you have the right product.
- New or worse mental, mood, or behavior problems have happened when bupropion has been used to stop smoking. These problems include thoughts of suicide or murder, depression, forceful actions, fury, anxiety, and anger. These problems have happened in people with and without a history of mental or mood problems. Talk with the doctor.

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 high blood pressure like very bad headache or dizziness, passing out, or change in eyesight.
- Feeling confused, not able to focus, or change in behavior.
- Hallucinations (seeing or hearing things that are not there).
- If seizures are new or worse after starting this drug.
- Chest pain or pressure, a fast heartbeat, or an abnormal heartbeat.
- Swelling.
- Shortness of breath.
- Change in hearing.
- Ringing in ears.
- Passing urine more often.

- Swollen gland.
- Trouble moving around.
- Some people may have a higher chance of eye problems with this drug. Your doctor may want you to have an eye exam to see if you have a higher chance of these eye problems. Call your doctor right away if you have eye pain, change in eyesight, or swelling or redness in or around the eye.
- A severe skin reaction (Stevens-Johnson syndrome/toxic epidermal necrolysis) may happen. It can cause severe health problems that may not go away, and sometimes death. Get medical help right away if you have signs like red, swollen, blistered, or peeling skin (with or without fever); red or irritated eyes; or sores in your mouth, throat, nose, or eyes.

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:

All products:

- Dizziness or headache.
- Constipation, diarrhea, stomach pain, upset stomach, throwing up, or decreased appetite.
- Shakiness.
- Feeling nervous and excitable.
- Strange or odd dreams.
- Gas.
- Dry mouth.
- Trouble sleeping.
- Muscle or joint pain.
- Nose or throat irritation.

- Sweating a lot.
- A change in weight without trying.

Extended-release tablets:

- For some brands, you may see the tablet shell in your stool. For these brands, this is normal and not a cause for concern. If you have questions, talk with your doctor.

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.

For all uses of this drug:

- Do not take this drug more often than you are told. This may raise the risk of seizures. Be sure you know how far apart to take your doses.
- Take in the morning if taking once a day.
- Take with or without food.
- If you are not able to sleep, do not take this drug too close to bedtime. Talk with your doctor.
- Swallow whole. Do not chew, break, or crush.
- Keep taking this drug as you have been told by your doctor or other health care provider, even if you feel well.
- If you have trouble swallowing, talk with your doctor.

For stopping smoking:

- You may take this drug for 1 week before you stop smoking.
- Nicotine products and counseling may be used at the same time for best results.
- If you have not been able to quit smoking after taking this drug for 12 weeks, talk with your doctor.
- You may have signs of nicotine withdrawal when you try to quit smoking even when using drugs like this one to help you quit smoking. There are many signs of nicotine withdrawal. Rarely depression and suicidal thoughts have happened in people trying to quit smoking. Talk with your doctor.

What do I do if I miss a dose?

- 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 protected from light. Store in a dry place. Do not store in a bathroom.
- Keep all drugs in a safe place. Keep all drugs out of the reach of children and 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.

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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.

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