PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

# Guanfacine

This information from UpToDate® Lexidrug™ 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

Intuniv

## Brand Names: Canada

AG-Guanfacine XR; APO-Guanfacine XR; Intuniv XR; JAMP-Guanfacine XR; PRO-Guanfacine XR; SANDOZ Guanfacine XR

## What is this drug used for?

- It is used to treat high blood pressure.
- It is used to treat attention deficit problems with hyperactivity.

## 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.

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?

### All products:

- 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 until you see how this drug affects you.
- To lower the chance of feeling dizzy or passing out, rise slowly if you have been sitting or lying down. Be careful going up and down stairs.
- Check blood pressure and heart rate as the doctor has told you.

- Talk with your doctor before you use alcohol, marijuana or other forms of cannabis, or prescription or OTC drugs that may slow your actions.
- If you are taking this drug and have high blood pressure, talk with your doctor before using OTC products that may raise blood pressure. These include cough or cold drugs, diet pills, stimulants, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) like ibuprofen or naproxen, and some natural products or aids.
- Tell your doctor if you have too much sweat, fluid loss, throwing up, or loose stools. This may lead to low blood pressure.
- Be careful in hot weather or while being active. Drink lots of fluids to stop fluid loss.
- Do not stop taking this drug all of a sudden without calling your doctor. High blood pressure and fast heartbeat can happen if this drug is stopped all of a sudden. Other signs of withdrawal like headache, shakiness, or feeling agitated, confused, or nervous can also happen. If these get worse and are not treated, it could lead to a very bad health problem with signs like feeling very sleepy or tired, very bad headache, throwing up, change in eyesight, or seizures. If you need to stop this drug, you will want to slowly stop it as ordered by your doctor.

- Tell your doctor if you have been throwing up and cannot take this drug.
- If your doctor has told you to lower your dose or slowly stop taking this drug, you will need to check your blood pressure and heart rate closely. Follow what your doctor has told you to do.
- This drug may not be for use in children of all ages. Talk with the doctor before giving this drug to a child.
- 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.

### Extended-release tablets:

- If giving this drug to your child and your child's weight changes, talk with the doctor. The dose of this drug may need to be changed.

## 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.

- Very bad dizziness or passing out.
- Slow heartbeat.
- A heartbeat that does not feel normal.
- Not able to get or keep an erection.

## 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:

- Feeling dizzy, sleepy, tired, or weak.
- Dry mouth.
- Headache.
- Constipation.
- Upset stomach.
- Stomach pain.
- Trouble sleeping.

### Extended-release tablets:

- Feeling irritable.
- Throwing up.
- Decreased appetite.

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.

### Regular-release tablets:

- Take this drug at bedtime.
- Keep taking this drug as you have been told by your doctor or other health care provider, even if you feel well.

### Extended-release tablets:

- Swallow whole with some water or other drink.
- Do not chew, break, or crush.
- Avoid taking this drug with high-fat meals.
- Keep taking this drug as you have been told by your doctor or other health care provider, even if you feel well.
- Take this drug at the same time of day.

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

### Regular-release tablets:

- Take a missed 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 time.
- Do not take 2 doses at the same time or extra doses.

### Extended-release tablets:

- Skip the missed dose and go back to your normal time.
- Do not take 2 doses at the same time or extra doses.
- If you miss 2 or more days of this drug, call your doctor to find out how to restart.

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

- Store at room temperature 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.
- Some drugs may have another patient information leaflet. Check with your pharmacist. If you have any questions about this drug, please talk with your doctor, nurse, 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

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If you have questions or concerns, contact your healthcare provider. A member of your care team will answer Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Outside those hours, you can leave a message or talk with another MSK provider. There is always a doctor or nurse on call. If you're not sure how to reach your healthcare provider, call 212-639-2000.

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

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