PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Venlafaxine

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

Effexor XR

Brand Names: Canada

ACT Venlafaxine XR; APO-Venlafaxine XR; Auro-Venlafaxine XR; Effexor XR; M-Venlafaxine XR; MINT-Venlafaxine XR; PMS-Venlafaxine XR; PMSC-Venlafaxine XR; SANDOZ Venlafaxine XR; TARO-Venlafaxine XR; TEVA-Venlafaxine XR; Venlafaxine XR

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.
- This drug is not approved for use in children. Talk with the doctor.

What is this drug used for?

- It is used to treat depression.
- It is used to treat anxiety.
- It is used to treat panic attacks.
- It may be given to your child for other reasons. Talk with the doctor.

What do I need to tell the doctor BEFORE my child takes this drug?

- If your child is allergic to this drug; any part of this drug; or any other drugs, foods, or substances. Tell the doctor about the allergy and what signs your child had.
- If your child has high blood pressure.
- If your child has narrow-angle glaucoma.
- If your child is taking a weight loss drug.
- If your child has taken certain drugs for depression or certain other health problems in the last 14 days. This includes isocarboxazid, phenelzine, or tranylcypromine. Very high blood pressure may happen.
- If your child is taking any of these drugs: Linezolid or methylene blue.

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

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

What are some things I need to know or do while my child takes this drug?

All products:

- Tell all of your child's health care providers that your child is taking this drug. This includes your child's doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and dentists.
- Talk with your child's doctor before your child uses marijuana, other forms of cannabis, or prescription or OTC drugs that may slow your child's actions.
- Have your child avoid tasks or actions that call for alertness until you see how this drug affects your child. These are things like riding a bike, playing sports, or using items such as scissors, lawnmowers, electric scooters, toy cars, or motorized vehicles.
- Do not stop giving this drug to your child all of a sudden without calling the doctor. Your child may have a greater risk of side effects. Sometimes, these can be severe and last for a long time. If your child needs to stop this drug, slowly stop it as told by the doctor. Talk with the doctor if your child has any new or worsening signs.
- High blood pressure has happened with this drug. Have your child's blood pressure checked as you have been told by the doctor.
- Alcohol may interact with this drug. Be sure your child

does not drink alcohol.

- This drug may raise the chance of bleeding. Sometimes, bleeding can be life-threatening. Talk with the doctor.
- If your child has bipolar disorder, manic episodes may happen while taking this drug. Call the doctor if your child has signs of a manic episode.
- Some people may have a higher chance of eye problems with this drug. The doctor may want your child to have an eye exam to see if your child has a higher chance of these eye problems. Call the doctor right away if your child has eye pain, change in eyesight, or swelling or redness in or around the eye.
- Low blood sodium levels may happen with this drug. In very bad cases, this can be deadly. Talk with the doctor.
- High cholesterol has happened with this drug. If you have questions, talk with the doctor.
- This drug may affect certain lab tests. Tell all of your child's health care providers and lab workers that your child takes this drug.
- This drug may affect growth in children and teens in some cases. They may need regular growth checks. Talk with the doctor.

If your child is pregnant or breast-feeding a baby:

- Tell the doctor if your child is pregnant, may be pregnant, or plans to get pregnant while taking this drug. You will need to talk about the benefits and risks to your child and the baby. Taking this drug in mid to late pregnancy may lead to some health problems in your child (like bleeding after delivery) or the newborn.
- Tell the doctor if your child is breast-feeding a baby. You will need to talk about any risks to the baby.

Extended-release capsules:

- Parts of this drug may be seen in your child's stool. This is normal and not a cause for concern.

Extended-release tablets:

- You may see the tablet shell in your child's stool. This is normal and not a cause for concern.

What are some side effects that I need to call my child's 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 child's doctor or get medical help right away if your child has 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 low sodium levels like headache, trouble focusing, memory problems, feeling confused, weakness, seizures, or change in balance.
- Signs of bleeding like throwing up or coughing up blood; vomit that looks like coffee grounds; blood in the urine; black, red, or tarry stools; bleeding from the gums; abnormal vaginal bleeding; bruises without a cause or that get bigger; or bleeding you cannot stop.
- Signs of high blood pressure like very bad headache or dizziness, passing out, or change in eyesight.
- Chest pain or pressure.
- Seizures.
- Shortness of breath.
- Cough.
- Bone pain.
- A severe and sometimes deadly problem called serotonin syndrome may happen. The risk may be greater if your child also takes certain other drugs. Call

your child's doctor right away if your child has agitation; change in balance; confusion; hallucinations; fever; a fast or abnormal heartbeat; flushing; muscle twitching or stiffness; seizures; shivering or shaking; sweating a lot; severe diarrhea, upset stomach, or throwing up; or very bad headache.

If your child is or may be sexually active:

- Sex problems may happen with this drug. This includes decreased sex drive, trouble having an orgasm, ejaculation problems, or trouble getting or keeping an erection. In some cases, these problems have continued after stopping this drug. If you have any questions or concerns, talk with the doctor.

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 child's doctor or get medical help if any of these side effects or any other side effects bother your child or do not go away:

- Anxiety.
- Weight loss.
- Feeling dizzy, sleepy, tired, or weak.
- Shakiness.

- Headache.
- Feeling nervous and excitable.
- Constipation, diarrhea, upset stomach, throwing up, or decreased appetite.
- Dry mouth.
- Gas.
- Trouble sleeping.
- Sweating a lot.
- Strange or odd dreams.
- Yawning.

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

You may report side effects to your national health agency.

How is this drug best given?

Give this drug as ordered by your child's doctor. Read all information given to you. Follow all instructions closely.

All products:

- Give this drug with food.
- Give this drug at the same time of day.
- Keep giving this drug to your child as you have been told by your child's doctor or other health care provider, even if your child feels well.

Extended-release capsules:

- Have your child swallow whole. Do not let your child crush, chew, or dissolve the capsule or its contents.
- You may sprinkle contents of capsules on applesauce. Do not let your child chew. Have your child swallow right away and follow with cool water.

Extended-release tablets:

- Have your child swallow whole. Do not let your child chew, break, or crush.
- Give this drug with a full glass of water.

What do I do if my child misses a dose?

- Give a missed dose as soon as you think about it.
- If it is close to the time for your child's next dose, skip the missed dose and go back to your child's normal time.
- Do not give 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.
- 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 child's symptoms or health problems do not get better or if they become worse, call your child's doctor.
- Do not share your child's drug with others and do not give anyone else's drug to your child.
- Some drugs may have another patient information leaflet. If you have any questions about this drug, please talk with your child's 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 Terms of Use, available at https://www.wolterskluwer.com/en/know/clinical-effectiveness-terms.

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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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