

Antidepressant Drugs



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This document has been translated into other languages.
In case of any discrepancy or inconsistency, the English version shall prevail.

What are Antidepressants?

Antidepressants are medications designed to alleviate symptoms of depression and other related conditions. They work by adjusting the levels of specific chemicals in your brain known as neurotransmitters, which can affect your mood and emotions. The chemicals targeted will vary depending on the type of antidepressants.

Antidepressants are grouped into several types, including:

- Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors (SSRIs)
- Serotonin and Norepinephrine Reuptake Inhibitors (SNRIs)
- Atypical Antidepressants
- Tricyclic & Tetracyclic Antidepressants (TCAs & TeCAs)
- Serotonin Modulators
- Monoamine Oxidase Inhibitors (MAOIs)
- Lithium

Each of these types works in a slightly different way to ease the symptoms of depression. While the primary use of antidepressants is to treat depression, they can also be effective in treating a variety of other conditions. These can include anxiety disorders, obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), and certain types of chronic pain.

What are the common side effects of Antidepressants?

Common side effects can differ based on the type of antidepressant. If you experience any unpleasant side effects, you should consult your healthcare provider. They might suggest adjusting your dose or trying a different medication.

Classification	Common side effects
Selective Serotonin Reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs) <i>Citalopram, Escitalopram, Fluoxetine, Fluvoxamine, Paroxetine, Sertraline</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Feeling agitated, shaky or anxious (usually pass off a few days after starting the antidepressant)➤ Nausea and vomiting➤ Indigestion and stomach aches➤ Constipation or diarrhea➤ Loss of appetite➤ Insomnia or drowsiness➤ Low sex drive and sexual dysfunction
Serotonin and Norepinephrine reuptake inhibitors (SNRIs) <i>Desvenlafaxine, Duloxetine, Venlafaxine, Milnacipran</i>	

Classification	Common side effects
Atypical Antidepressants <i>Agomelatine, Mirtazapine, Bupropion</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Agomelatine: Headache, nausea, diarrhea, constipation, dizziness, anxiety, abnormal liver test results.➤ Mirtazapine: Weight gain, increased appetite, drowsiness, headache, dry mouth, nausea, vomiting.➤ Bupropion: Headache, nausea, insomnia, dizziness, constipation, abdominal pain, tremor.
Tricyclic & Tetracyclic Antidepressants (TCAs & TeCAs) <i>Amitriptyline, Clomipramine, Dothiepin, Doxepin, Imipramine, Mianserin, Nortriptyline, Trimipramine</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Dry mouth➤ Slight blurring of vision➤ Constipation➤ Problems passing urine➤ Drowsiness➤ Weight gain➤ Excessive sweating➤ Heart rhythm problems
Serotonin Modulators <i>Trazodone, Vortioxetine</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Trazodone: Drowsiness, headache, nausea, constipation, dry mouth➤ Vortioxetine: Dizziness, nausea, diarrhea, constipation, stomach wind, dry mouth. Abnormal dreams, itching.
Monoamine Oxidase Inhibitors (MAOIs) <i>Selegiline, Isocarboxazid, Moclobemide, Phenelzine</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Dizziness➤ Headache➤ Drowsiness or insomnia➤ Weight gain➤ Low sex drive and sexual dysfunction
Lithium	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Bitter taste➤ Dry mouth➤ Tremor➤ Polyuria➤ Weight gain

What should I be aware of when taking Antidepressants?

➤ Suicidal thoughts and behaviors:

Antidepressants may increase the risk of suicidal thoughts and behaviors, especially in pediatric and young adult patients

➤ Effectiveness:

Antidepressants can take several weeks to start working, and it can take between 4-8 weeks for your symptoms to start to ease.

➤ Alcohol:

Try to avoid alcohol. Consuming alcohol while taking antidepressants can increase their side effects.

How long will I need to take Antidepressants?

The length of time you will need to take an antidepressant can vary. Some people may need to take medication for a short time, while others may need long-term treatment. Your healthcare provider will work with you to determine the best course of treatment.

Can I stop taking my Antidepressants and how should I do it?

If you're considering stopping your medication, it's important to first talk to your healthcare provider. Stopping suddenly can cause withdrawal-like symptoms, and your depression might come back. It's safer to decrease your dose gradually under the guidance of your healthcare provider.

What should the caregiver do if patient refuses to take their Antidepressants?

If a patient refuses to take their medicine, it's important for caregivers to approach the situation with patience and understanding. Open communication is key. Discuss the importance of the medication, the benefits it provides, and the potential risks of not taking it. If the patient continues to refuse, it may be helpful to involve the doctor or a mental health professional in the conversation. They can provide further information and reassurance, or suggest alternative treatments if necessary. It's crucial to respect the patient's autonomy and feelings while also ensuring their health and safety.

DO

1. Strictly follow the doctor's instructions
2. Pay attention to the drug name, dosage and frequency, etc. before taking your medication
3. Read the prescription label carefully
4. Pay attention to the dosage, indication, contraindication and side effects
5. Understand the method of administration
6. Store your medication properly
7. Complete the prescribed course unless otherwise directed
8. If you have any questions, talk to your family and ask your health care professionals

DON'T

1. Change the dosage of your medication on your own
2. Stop taking your medication except on your doctor's advice.
3. Drink alcohol with your medication
4. Put your medication in other bottle.
5. Take other medication unless directed by your doctor.
6. Lie to your doctors about your compliance