

Endorsed by



Information for adult patients prescribed Duloxetine for the Treatment of Pain

Why have I been prescribed Duloxetine?

- ▶ Duloxetine is used to treat some types of persistent pain.
- ▶ Duloxetine is commonly prescribed for nerve pain, such as burning, shooting or stabbing pain.
- ▶ Duloxetine belongs to the group of medicines called Serotonin Noradrenergic Reuptake Inhibitors (SNRI) that are also used to treat depression.
- ▶ You may notice that information from the manufacturer may not mention your type of pain. For more information please read 'Use of medicines outside of their UK marketing authorisation in pain management and palliative medicine – information for patients' by the British Pain Society: https://www.britishpainsociety.org/static/uploads/resources/files/book_useofmeds_patient.pdf

How does Duloxetine work?

- ▶ Duloxetine works by changing the amount of specific nerve transmitters in the nervous system, reducing pain messages arriving in the brain.

When should I take it?

- ▶ It is best to take duloxetine at the same time each day. Most people take it in the morning. If you find that you feel drowsy after taking it in the morning, try taking it in the evening. Some patients may be advised to take duloxetine twice a day.

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How is Duloxetine taken?

- ▶ The capsules should be swallowed whole, with a glass of water.
- ▶ Duloxetine may be taken on an empty or full stomach.
- ▶ You will be told how much to start taking and when to increase the dose. The table at the end of the leaflet will help you remember when to increase the dose.
- ▶ Do not take more than prescribed.

How long will it take to work?

- ▶ Every patient is different. You may notice some initial benefit within 1 week. Your doctor may advise you to increase the dose gradually to get the maximum effect.
- ▶ Duloxetine does not work for everyone. If you do not feel any improvement in your pain, do not suddenly stop taking the tablets but speak to your doctor who may advise you to reduce it gradually

What are the possible side effects?

- ▶ Most side effects are mild and can be expected to reduce after a few doses.
- ▶ Common side effects include; headache, drowsiness, sickness (nausea), dizziness, blurred vision and dry mouth. If you have these side effects and they are of concern contact your doctor or pharmacist for advice.
- ▶ Less common side effects include loss of appetite, flushes, raised blood pressure, difficulty sleeping, feeling anxious, shaky and increased sweating. If any of these side effects occur contact your doctor or pharmacist for advice.
- ▶ If duloxetine is used along with antidepressants (e.g. citalopram, fluoxetine, sertraline, etc) this can in some patients lead to "serotonin syndrome" (sweating, shivering, tremors, agitation, restlessness, confusion, muscle spasms, raise in body temperature, increased heart rate, diarrhoea, etc). If you get any such symptoms contact your doctor immediately for advice.

Can I take this medication long-term?

- ▶ Yes, if it helps. You may wish to reduce treatment every so often, to check if your pain is still a problem. This should be done with the advice of your prescriber, gradually reducing your medication over a period of time.

Can I drink alcohol

- ▶ Effects of alcohol are enhanced (e.g. sedative effects) when taken while on duloxetine. It is best not to drink alcohol when you start taking it. Please also look at the section "Can I Drive?".

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Can I drive?

- ▶ Duloxetine may affect your ability to drive (e.g. drowsiness). The risk is increased if you take it along with other medications that have drowsiness as a side effect.
- ▶ If you feel any impairment, do not drive.
- ▶ You may need to tell the DVLA about your medical condition. Check <https://www.gov.uk/driving-medical-conditions>
- ▶ You can find more information in our Driving and Pain leaflet: <https://fpm.ac.uk/media/846>

What to discuss with your prescriber?

- ▶ If you are allergic to any drugs
- ▶ If you are taking any other medicines or herbal medicines
- ▶ If you have epilepsy or a glaucoma
- ▶ If you are taking any medicine that causes sleepiness (e.g. strong painkillers such as morphine) or increases the level of serotonin (e.g. tramadol, medicines taken for depression)
- ▶ If you are pregnant or breastfeeding, or if you are planning to become pregnant in the future
- ▶ If you take any anticoagulants, antiplatelet agents or other drugs to thin the blood.
- ▶ If you have or have had a mental health problem
- ▶ If you have kidney or liver problems
- ▶ If you are taking any antidepressant
- ▶ If you are taking ciprofloxacin, an antibiotic used to treat infections
- ▶ If you have or have had a history of excessive alcohol use, recreational drug use or addiction to prescribed or over-the-counter medication
- ▶ If you are regularly taking strong opioid medications (e.g. tramadol, tapentadol, morphine, oxycodone, fentanyl).

What if I forgot or miss a dose?

- ▶ If you take duloxetine at night only and forget a dose then you can consider taking it when you remember that night but this may result in sleepiness the following day and affect your concentration, work or driving ability. The alternative is to wait until the next dose is scheduled.
- ▶ If you only take one dose in the morning and you miss the dose, do not take the medicine in the evening. Wait until the next morning and skip the missed dose.
- ▶ If you are taking duloxetine twice a day take the missed dose as soon as you remember, unless it is less than 4 hours until your next dose, in which case skip the missed dose
- ▶ Do not take two doses together.

What if I want to stop taking Duloxetine?

- ▶ If you stop taking duloxetine suddenly, you might experience withdrawal symptoms. Speak to your prescriber who will be able to supervise a gradual reduction.

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This information is not intended to replace your prescriber's advice. We advise you to read the manufacturer's information for patients, which will be supplied by your pharmacist when your medicine is dispensed. Keep all medicines away from children, vulnerable adults or pets.

Date	Morning	Lunch	Tea Time	Night

This leaflet will be reviewed in 2024