



Patient and Caregiver Information on Atomoxetine

What is this drug used for?

Atomoxetine is used primarily in the treatment of attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) in children and adults, and may also help treat symptoms of anxiety that may be present along with ADHD.

Ask your doctor if you are not sure why you are taking this drug.

Note: This medication may not have formal approval by regulatory agencies such as Health Canada or the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for use in children or adolescents for some or all of the above uses.

How quickly will the drug start working?

Some response to atomoxetine is usually noted within the first 3–4 weeks of treatment of ADHD.

How does your doctor decide on the dosage?

Atomoxetine comes in a capsule; the dose is based on how you respond to initial low doses and is guided by your body weight. The capsule is usually taken once or twice a day, with or without food. **Do not increase or decrease the dose without speaking to your doctor.**

How long should you take this medication?

Atomoxetine is usually prescribed for a period of several months to years.

What side effects may happen?

Side effects may happen with any drug. They are not usually serious and do not happen to everyone. Side effects may sometimes occur before beneficial effects of the medication are noticed. If you think you may be having a side effect, speak to your doctor or pharmacist as they can help you decrease it or cope with it.

Common side effects that should be reported to your doctor at the NEXT VISIT include:

- Increased anxiety, agitation or excitability – some individuals may feel nervous or have difficulty sleeping for a few days after starting this medication.
- Headache – this tends to be temporary and can be managed by taking pain medicine (e.g., acetaminophen or ibuprofen) when required. If the headache persists or is “troubling,” contact your doctor.
- Nausea, abdominal pain, vomiting – try taking your medication with food; if symptoms persist, speak to your doctor.
- Loss of appetite, weight loss – eating smaller meals more frequently or drinking liquid nutritional supplements may help.
- Feeling sleepy and tired – the problem usually goes away with time, however, your doctor may suggest you take your medication at bedtime. Use of other drugs that make you drowsy will worsen the problem. Avoid operating machinery or tasks that require alertness if drowsiness persists.

- Dry mouth – sour candy and sugarless gum help increase saliva in your mouth. Do not drink sugar-containing drinks as they may give you cavities and increase your weight. Drink water and brush your teeth regularly.
- Dizziness – get up from a lying or sitting position slowly; dangle your legs over the edge of the bed for a few minutes before getting up. Sit or lie down if dizziness persists or if you feel faint, then contact your doctor.
- Difficulty remembering things – speak to your doctor.

Rare side effects you should report to your doctor **RIGHT AWAY** include:

- Fast or irregular heart beat
- Skin rash with swelling, itching
- Soreness of the mouth, gums or throat
- Any unusual bruising or bleeding, appearance of splotchy purplish darkening of the skin
- Tenderness on the right side of your abdomen, fatigue, weakness, fever or flu-like symptoms accompanied by nausea, vomiting or loss of appetite
- Yellow tinge in the eyes or to the skin; dark-colored urine (pee)
- Going 12 or more hours without peeing
- Severe agitation, restlessness, or irritability
- A persistent or painful erection of the penis that continues for longer than 4 hours
- **Switch in mood to an unusual state of happiness, excitement, irritability, a marked disturbance in sleep, or thoughts of suicide**

Let your doctor know as soon as possible if you miss your period or think you may be pregnant, plan to become pregnant, or are breastfeeding.

What should you do if you forget to take a dose of your medication?

If you take atomoxetine more than once a day and you forget to take a dose by more than 6 hours, skip the missed dose and continue with your regular schedule. **DO NOT DOUBLE THE DOSE.**

Is this drug safe to take with other medication?

Because atomoxetine can change the effect of other medication or may be affected by other medication, always check with your doctor or pharmacist before taking other drugs, including those you can buy without a prescription such as cold remedies and herbal preparations. Always inform any doctor or dentist that you see that you are taking atomoxetine.

Precautions/considerations

1. This medication should not be used in patients who have high blood pressure, heart disease or abnormalities, hardening of the arteries or an overactive thyroid.
2. Report to your doctor any changes in sleeping or eating habits or changes in mood or behavior.
3. Do not change your dose or stop atomoxetine without speaking with your doctor.
4. Use caution while performing tasks requiring alertness as atomoxetine can mask fatigue.

5. This drug may interact with medication prescribed by your dentist, so let him/her know you are taking atomoxetine.

What else do I need to know about atomoxetine?

1. Swallow the capsules whole; do not open the capsules as the powder inside the capsule may irritate your eyes.
2. Take atomoxetine with or after meals to lessen stomach upset, nausea or vomiting.
3. Store your medication in a clean dry area at room temperature. Keep all medication out of reach of children.

If you have any questions regarding this medication, please ask your doctor, pharmacist, or nurse.