

PART III: CONSUMER INFORMATION

EFFEXOR® XR (Venlafaxine Hydrochloride) Extended Release Capsules

This leaflet is part III of a three-part "Product Monograph" published when EFFEXOR XR was approved for sale in Canada and is designed specifically for Consumers. This leaflet is a summary and will not tell you everything about EFFEXOR XR. Contact your doctor or pharmacist if you have any questions about the drug.

Please read this information carefully before you start to take your medicine, even if you have taken this drug before. Do not throw away this leaflet until you have finished your medicine as you may need to read it again. For further information or advice, please see your doctor or pharmacist.

ABOUT THIS MEDICATION

What the medication is used for:

EFFEXOR XR has been prescribed to you by your doctor to relieve your symptoms of the following conditions:

- Depression (feeling sad, a change in appetite or weight, difficulty concentrating or sleeping, feeling tired, headaches, unexplained aches and pain)
- Generalized anxiety or nervousness
- Social phobia (social anxiety disorder) – avoidance and/or fear of social situations
- Panic disorder (repeated, unexpected panic attacks)

What it does:

EFFEXOR XR belongs to a group of medicines called anti-depressants. EFFEXOR XR is thought to work by affecting two naturally occurring brain chemicals, serotonin and norepinephrine.

When it should not be used:

- Do not use EFFEXOR XR if you are allergic to it or to any of the components of its formulation (see list of components at the end of this section). Stop taking the drug and contact your doctor immediately if you experience an allergic reaction or any severe or unusual side effects.
- Do not use EFFEXOR XR if you are currently taking or have recently taken monoamine oxidase inhibitor antidepressants (e.g. phenelzine sulphate, moclobemide).

What the medicinal ingredient is:

Venlafaxine Hydrochloride

What the nonmedicinal ingredients are:

Black Iron Oxide NF**, Ethylcellulose NF, Gelatin NF, Hydroxypropyl-methylcellulose USP, Microcrystalline cellulose NF, Opacode Red Print S-15094/45****, Red Iron Oxide*, Talc, Titanium Dioxide*, White Ink TekPrint SB-0007P***, Yellow Iron Oxide*.

* Present (in capsule) in all strengths

** Present (in capsule) in 37.5 mg strength only

*** 150 mg strength

**** 37.5 and 75 mg strengths

What dosage forms it comes in:

EFFEXOR XR is available in extended release capsules containing 37.5 mg (grey and peach), 75 mg (peach) and 150 mg (dark orange) venlafaxine.

WARNINGS AND PRECAUTIONS

During treatment with these types of medication it is important that you and your doctor have good ongoing communication about how you are feeling.

EFFEXOR XR is not for use in children under 18 years of age.

New or Worsened Emotional or Behavioural Problems

Particularly in the first few weeks or when doses are adjusted, a small number of patients taking drugs of this type may feel worse instead of better; for example, they may experience unusual feelings of agitation, hostility or anxiety, or have impulsive or disturbing thoughts such as thoughts of self-harm or harm to others. Should this happen to you, or to those in your care if you are a caregiver or guardian, consult your doctor immediately. Close observation by a doctor is necessary in this situation. **Do not discontinue your medication on your own.**

Before taking EFFEXOR XR tell your doctor or pharmacist:

- if you have ever had any allergic reaction to medications, food, etc;
- all your medical conditions, including a history of seizures, liver disease, kidney disease, heart problems or high cholesterol, or history of any abnormal bleeding;
- if you have blood pressure problems;
- any medications (prescription or non-prescription) which you are taking, especially monoamine oxidase (MAO) inhibitors (e.g. phenelzine sulfate, tranylcypromine sulfate, moclobemide or selegiline) or any other antidepressants, weight-loss medication, sleeping pills, antianxiety drugs, or medication to control blood pressure;
- if you are pregnant or thinking about becoming pregnant, or if you are breast feeding;
- your habits of alcohol and/or street drug consumption;
- any natural or herbal products you are taking (e.g., St. John's Wort).
- if you drive a vehicle or perform hazardous tasks during your work.

Discontinuing Effexor XR

It is very important that you do NOT stop taking these medications without first consulting your doctor. See SIDE EFFECTS AND WHAT TO DO ABOUT THEM section for more information.

Effects on Pregnancy and Newborns

Post-marketing reports indicate that some newborns whose mothers took an SSRI (selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor) or other newer anti-depressants, such as EFFEXOR XR, during pregnancy have developed complications at birth requiring prolonged hospitalization, breathing support and tube feeding. Reported symptoms included feeding and/or breathing difficulties, seizures, tense or overly relaxed muscles, jitteriness

and constant crying.

In most cases, the SSRI or other newer anti-depressant was taken during the third trimester of pregnancy. These symptoms are consistent with either a direct adverse effect of the anti-depressant on the baby, or possibly a discontinuation syndrome caused by sudden withdrawal from the drug. These symptoms normally resolve over time. However, if your baby experiences any of these symptoms, contact your doctor as soon as you can.

If you are pregnant and taking an SSRI, or other newer anti-depressant, you should discuss the risks and benefits of the various treatment options with your doctor. It is very important that you do NOT stop taking these medications without first consulting your doctor. See SIDE EFFECTS AND WHAT TO DO ABOUT THEM section for more information.

INTERACTIONS WITH THIS MEDICATION

Do not use EFFEXOR XR if you are taking or have recently taken monoamine oxidase inhibitors.

You should avoid taking St. John's Wort if you are taking **EFFEXOR XR**.

You should tell your doctor if you are taking or have recently taken any medications (prescription, non-prescription or natural/herbal), especially:

- other antidepressants, such as SSRIs and certain tricyclics
- other drugs that affect serotonin such as, lithium, linezolid, sibutramine, tramadol, tryptophan, triptans used to treat migraines
- certain medicines used to treat schizophrenia
- certain medicines used to treat bipolar depression, such as lithium
- metoprolol or other medications used to treat high blood pressure and angina
- certain medicines which may affect blood clotting and increase bleeding, such as oral anti-coagulants (e.g. warfarin), aspirin and other non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (e.g. ibuprofen)
- certain medicines used to treat epilepsy
- cimetidine
- In general, drinking alcoholic beverages should be kept to a minimum or avoided completely while taking EFFEXOR XR.
- Ketoconazole.

PROPER USE OF THIS MEDICATION

Usual dose:

- It is very important that you take **EFFEXOR XR** exactly as your doctor has instructed.
- Never increase or decrease the amount of **EFFEXOR XR** you, or those in your care if you are a caregiver or guardian, are taking unless your doctor tells you to and do not stop taking this medication without consulting your doctor.
- As with all antidepressants improvement with **EFFEXOR XR** is gradual. You may not have noticeable effect in the first few days of treatment. Some symptoms may begin to

improve within about 2 weeks but significant improvement can take several weeks.

- **EFFEXOR XR** should be taken once a day with food, as prescribed; do not divide, crush or chew the capsules.

REMEMBER: This medicine has been prescribed only for you. Do not give it to anybody else. If you have any further questions, please ask your doctor or pharmacist.

Overdose:

In case of overdose, contact your doctor or the nearest hospital emergency department, even though you may not feel sick.

Missed Dose:

If you happen to miss a dose, do not try to make up for it by doubling up on the dose next time. Just take your next regularly scheduled dose and try not to miss any more.

SIDE EFFECTS AND WHAT TO DO ABOUT THEM

Like all medications, EFFEXOR XR can cause some side effects. You may not experience any of them. For most patients these side effects are likely to be minor and temporary. However, some may be serious. Some of these side effects may be dose related. Consult your doctor if you experience these or other side effects, as the dose may have to be adjusted.

If you experience an allergic reaction (including red skin, hives, itching, swelling of the lips, face, tongue, throat, trouble breathing, wheezing, shortness of breath, skin rashes, blisters of the skin, sores or pain in the mouth or eyes) or any severe or unusual side effects, stop taking the drug and contact your doctor immediately.

Some side effects of EFFEXOR XR are:

- headache
- nausea
- dry mouth
- constipation
- loss of appetite
- vomiting
- sleepiness
- dizziness
- insomnia
- sexual problems
- weakness
- sweating
- nervousness
- abnormal vision

Particularly in the first few weeks or when doses are adjusted, a small number of patients taking drugs of this type may feel worse instead of better; for example, they may experience unusual feelings of agitation, hostility or anxiety, or have impulsive or disturbing thoughts such as thoughts of self-harm or harm to others. Should this happen to you, or to those in your care if you are a caregiver or guardian, consult your doctor immediately; do not discontinue your medication on your own.

EFFEXOR XR does not usually affect people’s normal activities. However, some people feel sleepy while taking it, in which case they should not drive or operate machinery.

Although psychiatric disorders may be associated with decreases in sexual desire, performance and satisfaction, treatment with this medication may also affect sexual functioning.

Effexor XR may increase blood pressure in some people. You should have your blood pressure measured prior to starting Effexor XR and during treatment. High blood pressure should be controlled before starting Effexor XR. Blood pressure changes may sometimes be sudden and without warning. Consult your doctor if you have symptoms that may indicate a sudden rise in your blood pressure, such as headache (particularly in the back of head/neck when waking up); stronger, possibly more rapid, or irregular heart beat; chest pain; dizziness; excessive tiredness; or blurred vision.

Effexor XR may raise cholesterol levels in some patients. Blood cholesterol tests may be required by your doctor during treatment with Effexor XR.

New or Worsened Emotional or Behavioural Problems

A small number of patients taking drugs of this type may feel worse instead of better; for example, they may experience new or worsened feelings of agitation, hostility or anxiety, or thoughts about suicide. Your doctor should be informed of such changes immediately. Close observation by a doctor is necessary in this situation. Do not discontinue your medication on your own. See also the WARNINGS AND PRECAUTIONS section.

Discontinuation Symptoms

Contact your doctor before stopping or reducing your dosage of EFFEXOR XR. Symptoms such as anorexia (loss of appetite, loss of weight), anxiety, agitation (restlessness), aggression, confusion, convulsions, coordination problems, diarrhea, dizziness, dry mouth, fatigue, headache, hypomania (rapid mood swings), insomnia, nausea, nervousness, nightmares, paresthesia (sensation of tingling, burning or crawling of the skin), electric shock sensations, sleep disturbances, somnolence (drowsiness), sweating, tinnitus (ringing in the ears), vertigo (sensation that the world is spinning), vomiting and other symptoms have been reported after stopping treatment, reducing the dosage of EFFEXOR XR, or when a dose is missed. These symptoms usually disappear without needing treatment. Tell your doctor immediately if you have these or any other symptoms. Your doctor may adjust the dosage of EFFEXOR XR to alleviate the symptoms.

Effects on Newborns

Some newborns whose mothers took an SSRI (Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitor) or other newer anti-depressant, such as EFFEXOR XR, during pregnancy have shown such symptoms as breathing and feeding difficulties, jitteriness and constant crying. If your baby experiences any of these symptoms, contact your doctor as soon as you can. See WARNINGS AND PRECAUTIONS section for more information.

SERIOUS SIDE EFFECTS, HOW OFTEN THEY HAPPEN AND WHAT TO DO ABOUT THEM				
Symptom / effect		Talk with your doctor or pharmacist right away		Seek urgent medical attention
		Only if severe	In all cases	
Common	Increased blood pressure that persists [see also Severe Hypertension below]		✓	
Common	Fast heartbeat		✓	
Uncommon	Allergic reactions [red skin, hives, itching, swelling of the lips, face, tongue, throat, trouble breathing, wheezing, shortness of breath, skin rashes, blisters of the skin, sores or pain in the mouth or eyes]			✓
Uncommon	Low sodium level in blood [symptoms of tiredness, weakness, confusion combined with achy, stiff or uncoordinated muscles]		✓	
Uncommon	Bruising or unusual bleeding from the skin or other areas		✓	
Uncommon	Mania/hypomania [elevated or irritable mood, decreased need for sleep, racing thoughts]		✓	
Uncommon	Akathisia [feeling restless and unable to sit or stand still]		✓	
Uncommon	Hallucinations [strange visions or sounds]		✓	
Uncommon	Uncontrollable movements of the body or face		✓	
Uncommon	Inability to urinate		✓	
Uncommon	Gastrointestinal bleeding [vomiting blood or passing blood in stools]		✓	
Rare	Seizures [loss of consciousness with uncontrollable shaking “fit”]			✓

SERIOUS SIDE EFFECTS, HOW OFTEN THEY HAPPEN AND WHAT TO DO ABOUT THEM

Symptom / effect	Talk with your doctor or pharmacist right away	Seek urgent medical attention	
		Only if severe	In all cases
Rare Serotonin syndrome [a combination of most or all of the following; confusion, restlessness, sweating, shaking, shivering, sudden jerking of the muscles, hallucinations, fast heartbeat]			✓
Rare Liver disorder [symptoms include nausea, vomiting, loss of appetite combined with itching, yellowing of the skin or eyes, dark urine]			✓
Very rare Increased pressure in the eyes [symptoms of eye pain, decreased or blurred vision, red eye, swelling of eye]			✓
See Warnings and Precautions New or worsened emotional or behavioural problems			✓
See Side Effects and What to Do About Them Severe Hypertension [symptoms include headache, stronger and possibly faster heartbeat, chest pain, dizziness, excessive tiredness, blurred vision]			✓

This is not a complete list of side effects. For any unexpected effects while taking EFFEXOR XR, contact your doctor or pharmacist.

HOW TO STORE IT

- Store **EFFEXOR XR** at room temperature (15-30°C), in a dry place.
- Keep container tightly closed.
- Keep all medicines out of the reach of children.
- If your doctor tells you to stop taking EFFEXOR XR please return any left over medicine to your pharmacist.

REPORTING SUSPECTED SIDE EFFECTS

To monitor drug safety, Health Canada through the Canada Vigilance Program collects information on serious and unexpected effects of drugs. If you suspect you have had a serious or unexpected reaction to this drug you may notify Canada Vigilance by:

toll-free telephone: 866-234-2345
toll-free fax 866-678-6789
By email: CanadaVigilance@hc-sc.gc.ca

By regular mail:
Canada Vigilance National Office
Marketed Health Products Safety and Effectiveness Information Division
Marketed Health Products Directorate
Health Products and Food Branch
Health Canada
Tunney's Pasture, AL 0701C
Ottawa ON K1A 0K9

NOTE: Before contacting Canada Vigilance, you should contact your physician or pharmacist.

MORE INFORMATION

This document plus the full product monograph, prepared for health professionals can be found by contacting the sponsor,
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1025 Marcel Laurin Blvd.
Saint Laurent, Quebec
H4R 1J6

1-800-461-8844

or at <http://www.wyeth.ca/en>.

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