



ESCITALOPRAM

es-sih-tal-oh-pram

What does it do?

Escitalopram is used to treat and prevent depression, and sometimes other conditions.

How should you take it?

Take *escitalopram* regularly as directed with a glass of water.

What if you forget a dose?

Take the missed dose as soon as possible. If it is close to the time for your next dose, skip the missed dose and carry on as normal. Do not take two doses at the same time.

Can you take other medicines?

Some medicines available without a prescription may react with *escitalopram* including:

- anti-inflammatories, such as diclofenac (e.g. Voltaren®), ibuprofen (e.g. Nurofen®), or aspirin (e.g. Disprin®, in doses used for pain relief). These can also be found in some cold and flu medicines (e.g. Nurofen Cold and Flu®).
- low-dose aspirin (e.g. Cartia®)
- cold and flu medicines containing dextromethorphan (e.g. Robitussin Dry Cough Forte®)
- omeprazole (e.g. Losec®)
- some migraine medicines, such as sumatriptan (e.g. Sumagran Active®) or zolmitriptan (e.g. Zomig®)

Tell your pharmacist or doctor about all medicines or treatments that you may be taking, including vitamins, herbal products (e.g. St John's wort) or recreational drugs (e.g. ecstasy).

What side effects might you notice?

Side Effects	Recommended action
Suicidal thoughts Fast or irregular heartbeat, fainting Muscle twitching or shaking you can't control, confusion, heavy sweating, fever	Tell your doctor immediately
Anxiety, restlessness	Tell your doctor
Nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea, dry mouth, abdominal pain, change of appetite or weight Drowsiness, dizziness, headache, trouble sleeping, yawning, weakness Changes in sexual function, changes in periods	Tell your doctor if troublesome

If you notice any other effects, discuss them with your doctor or pharmacist.

Other information:

- Tell your doctor if you have heart, liver or blood problems, bipolar disorder, or if you have ever had a seizure.
- Tell your doctor if you are pregnant, planning to become pregnant, or breastfeeding.
- Your doctor may do a heart test (ECG) before you start and while you are taking *escitalopram*.
- *Escitalopram* may make you dizzy or sleepy and make it dangerous to drive, operate machinery or do other activities that require you to be alert. Limit alcohol intake because it can increase these effects.
- It may take a few weeks for *escitalopram* to start working.
- Feelings of anxiety in the first few weeks of therapy are common, but should get better. Discuss with your doctor.
- If your depression continues to get worse, see your doctor.
- Do not stop taking *escitalopram* without talking to your doctor first.

This leaflet contains important, but not all, information about this medicine.

Prepared by the PILs Committee at Christchurch Hospital, Canterbury District Health Board, New Zealand. September 2017