

## VENLAFAXINE

*ven-lah-fax-een*

### What does it do?

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

### How should you take it?

Take *venlafaxine* regularly as directed with a glass of water. Swallow the tablets or capsules whole.

### 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 *venlafaxine* 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®)
- 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<br>Fast or irregular heartbeat<br>Muscle twitching or shaking you can't control, confusion, heavy sweating, fever  | Tell your doctor immediately    |
| Anxiety  | Tell your doctor                |
| Dizziness, drowsiness, headache, blurred vision, flushing, yawning, strange dreams, trouble sleeping<br>Muscle weakness, tingling or numbness<br>Loss of appetite, dry mouth, weight loss<br>Changes in sexual function, changes in periods, trouble peeing<br>Nausea, vomiting, constipation or diarrhoea | 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, kidney or bleeding problems.
- Tell your doctor if you have high cholesterol or blood pressure, glaucoma, bipolar disorder, or if you have ever had a seizure.
- Tell your doctor if you are pregnant, planning to become pregnant, or breastfeeding.
- *Venlafaxine* can impair your ability to do tasks such as driving or using machines. Alcohol makes this worse. Discuss your risk with your health professional. (search NZTA - Are you safe to drive?)
- It may take a few weeks for *venlafaxine* 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 *venlafaxine* without talking to your doctor first.