

Medication Information Sheet



Duloxetine

brands: Cymbalta®

Medications are only ONE part of a successful treatment plan. They are appropriate when they provide benefit, improve function and have either no or mild, manageable side effects. Importantly, medications (even if natural) are chemical substances not expected in the body, and as such have side effects. Some of the side effects might be unknown. The use of medications/drugs for any purpose requires patient consent. This practice does NOT require a patient to use any medication.

Information & potential benefits

Duloxetine is a pain and depression medication. It currently is FDA approved for depression as well as the pain of fibromyalgia. Based on studies, it may be approved for other types of chronic pain in the future. It is not uncommon for a pain patient to also experience depression. The medication works by helping to prevent the destruction of two of the nervous system's important chemicals: serotonin and norepinephrine.

Potential risks and side effects

Fortunately, the medication tends not to cause weight gain, and may cause some weight loss. Of course, every person is different and some patients could gain weight. Common side effects include sleepiness, dizziness, nausea and dry mouth. Like most medications, the liver helps remove the medication from the body. Therefore, Cymbalta must be used carefully if there is any liver disease. Like most pain medications, Cymbalta should not be used with alcohol. There have been cases of liver problems with the medication and it seems that the liver problems occur more frequently in alcohol users. Cymbalta should not be used with uncontrolled narrow-angle glaucoma. It should not be used with MAO inhibitors. As with all antidepressants and other neuropathic pain medications, there is a potential worsening of depression when the medication is first started. All medications in this class may worsen depression when first started, possibly resulting in suicide. This is rare, but all patients should be aware of the risk and should let the prescribing provider know immediately of any worsening of depression

Dosing information

The FDA-approved doses begin at 20-30mg per day and increase to 60mg per day. Many pain patients use 90mg per day. Those doses, although helpful, were not evaluated by the FDA. There are two common dose regimens, the low dose regimen using 20mg increments, and the higher-dose regimen, using 30mg increments. The 30mg regimen appears more common in pain centers.

Important information

Disclaimer: This is for informational purposes only. This does not replace the instructions you received from your provider, does not constitute initiation of medical treatment or establishment of a patient-physician relationship, does not constitute any form of recommendation, prescription or medical advice, and does not imply that the medication is appropriate or FDA approved for any condition. This information is not a complete listing of instructions, doses, uses or side effects. If this was prescribed to you, you must review this information with your pharmacist and prescriber before starting the medication. Any medication may interfere with the ability to drive, concentrate or operate machinery; patients must be responsible for their own behavior and should not engage in any dangerous activity if there is any question of impairment. All medications have side effects and drug interactions, some serious, some fatal. Let all of your practitioners and pharmacists know about every substance used. Alcohol, herbals or illegal drugs are not considered safe with these medications. Assume no medication is safe during pregnancy or while breast feeding. The medication may interfere with birth control. Almost any medication can cause sleepiness, insomnia, dizziness, confusion, hallucinations, anxiety, panic, constipation or diarrhea, headache, chest pain and nausea or vomiting, among others. Most medications should NOT be stopped suddenly because of the risk of withdrawal.