Jeffrey Panko NP
PSYCHIATRY

Jeffrey Panko, PMHNP-BC
Phone 646-549-4694 | Fax 646-558-4238
JMPankoNP@JeffreyPanko.com
jeffreypanko.com

PATIENT EDUCATION

Desvenlafaxine

Pristiq / Generic extended-release tablets

A guide for adults taking desvenlafaxine.
Follow the directions on your prescription and your provider's recommendations.

SWALLOW TABLETS WHOLE | DO NOT STOP OR CHANGE DOSES ON YOUR OWN

Formulations: Extended-release tablets are usually taken once daily. Kidney impairment can require a lower dose or less frequent dosing.

What it is used for

Desvenlafaxine treats major depression. It is sometimes used off-label for menopausal hot flashes; that use has a different treatment goal.

How it works

It inhibits serotonin and norepinephrine reuptake. It is also the principal active metabolite of venlafaxine, but the two medications have different dosing instructions.

What to expect over time

Sleep, energy, or appetite may change before mood improves. Benefit usually builds over several weeks; some conditions need a longer trial at a useful dose.

Track the symptoms you are treating and how you manage daily activities. Keep follow-up appointments. Schedule an earlier appointment if your mood gets worse.

Taking your medication

- Take with or without food. Swallow tablets whole; do not divide, crush, chew, or dissolve.
- If you miss a dose, take it when you remember unless it is almost time for the next dose. Then skip it. Do not double a dose.
- An empty tablet shell may appear in stool after the medication has been released.
- Consult with your provider before stopping; withdrawal symptoms can be significant.

Jeffrey Panko NP
PSYCHIATRY

Jeffrey Panko, PMHNP-BC
Phone 646-549-4694 | Fax 646-558-4238
JMPankoNP@JeffreyPanko.com
jeffreypanko.com

DESVENLAFAXINE / 02

Side effects and safety

Possible side effects

- Nausea, dry mouth, or constipation
- Sweating, headache, or dizziness
- Sleep changes or reduced appetite
- Sexual side effects; increased blood pressure or pulse

Keeping track of treatment

Some side effects resolve with time; others may require a change of medication. Discuss persistent or bothersome side effects with your provider.

Antidepressants can increase suicidal thoughts in people under 25. Watch for changes in mood or behavior at any age, especially when starting treatment or changing a dose.

Tell your provider about emotional numbness, unusual agitation, or a reduced need for sleep with increased energy. These changes may call for a treatment adjustment.

Have blood pressure checked before starting and during treatment. Report unusual bleeding, severe headache, confusion, or marked weakness; low sodium is one possible cause.

If you take too much

For a suspected overdose, call Poison Control at **1-800-222-1222** immediately, even if you feel well. Call 911 for a seizure, collapse, trouble breathing, or inability to wake.

Before you start

Discuss any history of mania or bipolar disorder, seizures, heart disease, glaucoma, and kidney or liver problems.

Discuss pregnancy, pregnancy plans, and breastfeeding with your provider. Treatment decisions should consider both the medication and the condition being treated.

Medicines and interactions

Review all your medications with your provider, including over-the-counter medicines and supplements. Have new medications checked before taking them.

Do not combine with an MAOI. Allow at least 14 days after stopping an MAOI before desvenlafaxine and at least seven days after stopping desvenlafaxine before an MAOI, under provider supervision.

Other serotonergic medicines increase serotonin-syndrome risk. Aspirin, NSAIDs, and anticoagulants add bleeding risk. Review stimulants, decongestants, and alcohol.

Jeffrey Panko NP
PSYCHIATRY

Jeffrey Panko, PMHNP-BC
Phone 646-549-4694 | Fax 646-558-4238
JMPankoNP@JeffreyPanko.com
jeffreypanko.com

DESVENLAFAXINE / 03

Living with your treatment

When to get help

Emergency symptoms. Get emergency care for a seizure, severe allergic reaction, or sudden eye pain with vision changes. Fever with agitation, diarrhea, and stiff or twitching muscles may be serotonin syndrome and needs urgent assessment.

Prompt medical advice. Contact your provider right away for marked agitation, new hallucinations, or unusually high energy with very little need for sleep.

If you feel unsafe or have thoughts of self-harm, call 911 or go to an emergency department.

Your questions answered

Can I stop when I feel better?
Consult with your provider. Continuing treatment after improvement can reduce the chance that symptoms return. Most antidepressants should be reduced gradually to limit withdrawal symptoms.

What if I have sexual side effects?
Changes in desire, arousal, or orgasm are worth discussing. Your provider can review the dose or treatment options; do not stop or skip doses on your own.

Everyday tips

A regular dose time and refill reminder can help prevent missed doses.

Bring a few specific observations to appointments: sleep, motivation, anxiety, and activities that have become easier or harder.

Storage and safety

Keep medication in its labeled container, away from excess heat and moisture and out of reach of children and pets. Do not share it. Ask a pharmacy about disposal of unused medication.

Sources

Pfizer: Pristiq prescribing information

Educational handout; does not replace your prescription or provider's recommendations.