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PSYCHIATRY

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PATIENT EDUCATION

Deutetrabenazine

Austedo / Austedo XR

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

CHECK IR VERSUS XR | REPORT MOOD CHANGES PROMPTLY

Formulations: Austedo is an immediate-release tablet taken with food, often twice daily. Austedo XR is taken once daily with or without food. The formulations have different schedules.

What it is used for

Deutetrabenazine treats tardive dyskinesia in adults and chorea associated with Huntington disease. It reduces unwanted movements but does not cure the underlying condition.

How it works

It inhibits VMAT2, a transporter that packages chemical messengers such as dopamine for release. Reducing dopamine release can decrease involuntary movements.

What to expect over time

Movement benefit is assessed over weeks as the dose is adjusted. Track practical changes in eating, speaking, walking, and comfort, not only how movements look.

Taking your medication

- Swallow tablets whole; do not cut, crush, or chew.
- Increase only according to your provider’s schedule, generally no more often than weekly.
- 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.
- After more than one week off, contact your provider before restarting; the dose must be built up again.

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Side effects and safety

Possible side effects

- Sleepiness, fatigue, or dizziness
- Dry mouth, diarrhea, or constipation
- Restlessness, stiffness, or slowed movement

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.

Report depression or suicidal thoughts promptly. The boxed warning particularly concerns people with Huntington disease; everyone should report new mood symptoms.

Your provider may assess movements, falls, swallowing, and heart-rhythm risk.

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

Do not use with liver impairment. In Huntington disease, it is contraindicated with suicidal thoughts or untreated or inadequately treated depression. Discuss heart-rhythm problems, falls, and all current or recently stopped medicines.

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 tetrabenazine, valbenazine, reserpine, or an MAOI. Required switching intervals differ.

Strong CYP2D6 inhibitors such as fluoxetine, paroxetine, and bupropion require a lower maximum dose. Antipsychotics can add movement effects; alcohol and sedatives add drowsiness.

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Living with your treatment

When to get help

Emergency symptoms. Get emergency care for fever with severe stiffness and confusion, fainting with an irregular heartbeat, or a severe allergic reaction.

Prompt medical advice. Report new depression, restlessness, tremor, slowed walking, falls, or swallowing problems promptly.

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

Your questions answered

Does it need a taper?
A taper is not generally required, but consult with your provider because movements may return. Restarting after a longer gap needs retitration.

Why is an XR shell in my stool?
The empty shell may pass after releasing the medication. Do not take an extra dose.

Everyday tips

Keep a dose and movement record during adjustments.

Include someone you trust in observing mood or movement changes if useful.

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

DailyMed: Austedo / Austedo XR Medication Guide

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