Jeffrey Panko NP
PSYCHIATRY

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

PATIENT EDUCATION

Venlafaxine

Effexor XR / Generic immediate-release and extended-release formulations

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

IMMEDIATE- OR EXTENDED-RELEASE

TAKE WITH FOOD • KEEP THE SAME DAILY SCHEDULE

Formulations: Immediate-release tablets usually use divided doses; extended-release capsules or tablets are generally once daily. Handling differs between ER formulations.

What it is used for

Venlafaxine treats depression and, with certain extended-release formulations, generalized anxiety, social anxiety, and panic disorder. Other uses such as nerve pain are off-label.

How it works

It inhibits serotonin and norepinephrine reuptake. Norepinephrine effects become more prominent at higher exposure, but response and adverse effects vary.

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 food at consistent times.
- Swallow ER formulations whole unless the exact capsule label permits sprinkling; do not chew beads.
- 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.
- Avoid abrupt stopping or repeated missed doses. Withdrawal can be substantial, so reductions may need to be slow and individualized.

Jeffrey Panko NP
PSYCHIATRY

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

VENLAFAXINE / 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 MAOIs. Generally wait 14 days after an MAOI before venlafaxine and at least seven days after venlafaxine before an MAOI; the provider directs the switch.

Other serotonergic drugs can cause serotonin syndrome. NSAIDs or anticoagulants add bleeding risk, and other activating medicines may add blood-pressure effects.

Jeffrey Panko NP
PSYCHIATRY

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

VENLAFAXINE / 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

Official prescribing information: venlafaxine

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