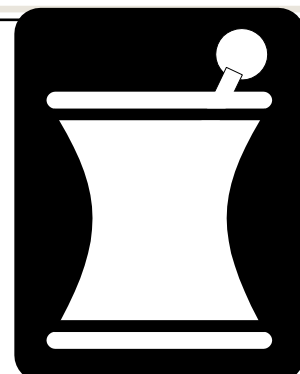


Atomoxetine

Patient information - Hillmorton Hospital Pharmacy

www.cdhb.health.nz

Atomoxetine is a non-stimulant medicine for the treatment of ADHD. It is in a class of medicines called selective noradrenaline reuptake inhibitors. It works by increasing the amount available in the brain of a naturally occurring chemical called noradrenaline.



Is Atomoxetine safe to take?

It is usually safe to take atomoxetine regularly as prescribed by your doctor, but it doesn't suit everyone. Atomoxetine is not a suitable medicine for children under the age of 6.

Let your doctor know if you have the following, as extra care may be needed:

- High or low blood pressure, heart disease, a change on ECG called QT prolongation
- Liver problems
- Glaucoma
- Hyperthyroidism (overactive thyroid)
- Pheochromocytoma (an extremely rare condition)
- Seizures, fits or convulsions
- Pregnant or breastfeeding

How should atomoxetine be taken and what should be done if a dose is missed?

Look at the label on your medicine; it should have all the necessary instructions on it. Follow this advice carefully. If you or your child have any questions, speak to your pharmacist,

doctor or nurse. Atomoxetine is taken once or twice daily with or without food. You should swallow the whole capsule. Never change your dose without checking with your doctor. If you/your child forgets a dose, take it as soon as you remember, as long as it is within in few hours of the usual time. Do not take a double dose to make up for missed doses.

What will happen when atomoxetine is started ?

Atomoxetine does not work straight away. Some response to atomoxetine is usually noted within the first 3-4 weeks. Atomoxetine is usually prescribed for a period of several months to years. Like all medicines, atomoxetine can have side effects but not everyone gets them. Look at the table over the page. It tells you what to do if you get any side-effects. Many of these can be quite mild and should go away after a week or so. There are many other possible side-effects. Ask your pharmacist, doctor or nurse if you are worried about anything else that you think might be a side-effect.

Are there other medicines that should be avoided or taken care with?

Always tell your doctor what you are taking and ask your pharmacist before you buy any “other-the-counter” medicines because atomoxetine can change the effect of other medication, or may be affected by other medication, for example fluoxetine or any medication to help mood or behaviour.

How long should your child keep taking atomoxetine?

If your child stops taking atomoxetine, their original symptoms may return, however it is likely that at some stage it will be appropriate for your child to stop taking it. Most people stop these medications by the time they finish their formal education. At least every two years the medication should be reviewed by a specialist to see if it is still appropriate. It is important to learn strategies to cope with the symptoms of ADHD and not to solely rely on medication as the only treatment strategy.

Recommended websites

HealthInfo Canterbury: www.healthinfo.org.nz

ADHD Support Group: www.adhd.org.nz

American Academy Facts for Families: www.aacap.org/cs/root/facts_for_families/facts_for_families

Medsafe New Zealand: www.medsafe.govt.nz/profs/Datasheet/dsform.asp

NIHM: www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics

The Royal College of Psychiatrists: www.rcpsych.ac.uk/mentalhealthinformation.aspx

Remember, leaflets like this can only describe some effects of medication. You may also find other books or leaflets useful. If you have access to the internet, you may find a lot of information there as well, but be careful as internet based information is not always accurate.

What about alcohol and marijuana?

It is recommended that people taking atomoxetine do not drink alcohol, use marijuana or take party pills (“herbal highs”). Alcohol, marijuana and party pills can increase some of the effects of atomoxetine and increase side effects. As well as this, drinking alcohol, smoking marijuana and taking party pills can often make your symptoms worse. Excessive use of any or all of these is especially likely to do this.

Will atomoxetine increase the risk of drug abuse in later years?

Young people with ADHD are at increased risk for alcohol and drug use however available evidence does not indicate that treatment with atomoxetine will increase the risk of this.

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SIDE EFFECT	WHAT IS IT?	WHAT SHOULD I DO IF THIS HAPPENS TO ME?
Common		
Tachycardia	A faster heart beat. It may feel like palpitations. You generally will not notice this..	Your doctor will check blood pressure and pulse before and after starting atomoxetine and discuss this with you if it is a problem. Contact your doctor if you or your child feel dizzy, faint or feel your heart racing without reason.
Hypertension	Increased blood pressure. You generally will not notice this.	Your doctor will check blood pressure and pulse before and after starting atomoxetine and discuss this if it is a problem.
Headache	When your head is pounding and painful.	You or your child can take paracetamol for this. Discuss with your doctor if prolonged.
Insomnia	Difficulty in being able to get to sleep at night.	Discuss this with your doctor.
Dry mouth	Not much saliva or spit. Dry mouth can cause problems with speech, taste, chewing and swallowing. It can also increase the risk of getting dental decay and infection in your mouth.	To help prevent dental problems sip water regularly to moisten your mouth. Brush your teeth twice a day with fluoride toothpaste. Avoid sugary drinks and snacks between meals. Try sugar free chewing gum to stimulate saliva or discuss using an oral lubricant with your pharmacist or dentist.
Decrease in appetite	Feeling like eating less when on this medication.	Eat breakfast with your morning dose and discuss this with your doctor especially if you/your child loses weight.
Nausea, vomiting and abdominal pain	Feeling sick, throwing up and having a sore stomach.	Taking each dose with or after food may help. If it is bad, contact your doctor.
Somnolence and sedation	Feeling sleepy and tired.	Usually this goes away with time, however, your doctor might suggest you to take atomoxetine at night.
Less common		
Sexual dysfunction	Lack of libido or no interest in sex. Inability to maintain an erection or have an orgasm.	Discuss this with your doctor.
Constipation	Feeling "bunged up" inside. You can't pass a bowel motion.	Eat more fibre, e.g. bran, fruit and vegetables. Do more walking. Make sure you drink plenty of fluid. A mild laxative from a pharmacy might help.
Urinary retention	Difficulty in passing urine.	Discuss this with your doctor when you next meet.
Allergic reaction	A sudden onset of skin rash, itching, swelling, of the face, lips and tongue, difficulty breathing.	Contact your doctor or the emergency department immediately.
Rare		
Seizures	Having fits or blackout	Stop taking your atomoxetine and contact your doctor or emergency department immediately.
Dysmenorrhoea	Painful periods in females	Discuss this with your doctor when you next meet.
Increase in suicidal thinking	Suicidal thoughts or behaviours (including agitation, irritability, unusual changes in behaviour)	Contact your doctor immediately.
<p>Signs of liver dysfunction:</p> <p>Contact doctor immediately and stop taking atomoxetine if you experience these symptoms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pruritis (extreme itch) • Dark urine • Jaundice (yellow tinge in the eyes or to the skin): • Tenderness on the right side of your abdomen • Unexplained "flu-like" symptoms with nausea and vomiting • Fatigue • Weakness 		