

# Buspirone

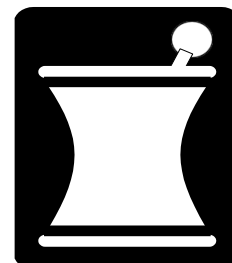
## Patient Information - Hillmorton Hospital Pharmacy

### Why have I been prescribed Buspirone?

Buspirone is a medicine that relieves the symptoms of anxiety.

Being tense or worried can be a normal response to stress (e.g. going to the dentist or starting a new job can be stressful). A small amount of anxiety can help us to cope with difficult situations.

However sometimes you can feel anxious or “worked up” for no reason or your anxiety can be worse than usual. When anxiety becomes severe or ongoing it can upset our daily lives. As well as feeling tense and unable to relax, you may feel sweaty, you may have a fast heartbeat, be short of breath, get stomach cramps or the shakes or you may look more pale than usual.



### What exactly is Buspirone?

Buspirone is one of a group of medicines called an anxiolytic. Anxiolytics relieve the symptoms of anxiety. It is not a tranquiliser or a sleeping tablet or a benzodiazepine. It acts on chemicals in the brain called serotonin and dopamine to help reduce anxiety.

### Is Buspirone safe to take?

It is usually safe to take buspirone regularly as prescribed, but it doesn't suit everyone. Let your doctor or prescriber know if any of the following apply to you:

- If you have liver or kidney problems
- Epilepsy
- Parkinson's Disease
- If you are pregnant or breastfeeding
- If you are taking an antidepressant (e.g. citalopram, paroxetine, fluoxetine, sertraline, escitalopram, tranylcypromine, phenelzine, moclobemide) or St John's Wort.

### How should I take my Buspirone and what should I do if I miss a dose?

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

Never change your dose without checking with your doctor. If you forget a dose, take it as soon as you remember, as long as it is within two or three hours of the usual time. Do not take a double dose to make up for missed doses.

## **Is Buspirone addictive?**

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No, buspirone is not addictive.

## **What will happen to me when I start taking my Buspirone ?**

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Buspirone may take some time to work. You may feel less anxious over a period of several weeks rather than days. Different symptoms may get better at different times. Most people find that they feel noticeably better after about four weeks. It is very important to continue to take your buspirone so that the full effects can be felt.

You may get some side effects. Many of these can be quite mild and should go away after a week or two. Your doctor may increase your dose of buspirone quite slowly in order to reduce the risk of you experiencing any side effects. Look at the table of side effects on the next page. Not everyone will get the side effects shown. Some less common side effects are not listed. Ask your doctor, pharmacist or nurse if you are worried about anything else that you think might be a side effect.

## **Are there any medicines that I should avoid or take care with?**

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Always tell your doctor or prescriber what you are taking and ask your pharmacist before you buy any “over-the-counter” medicines. Buspirone may react with a range of medicines including anti-depressants, migraine tablets, pain relievers such as tramadol, some antibiotics, St John’s Wort and some cough and cold preparations containing dextromethorphan. Buspirone also interacts with grapefruit and grapefruit juice, so you will need to avoid grapefruit as well.

## **When I feel better, can I stop taking Buspirone?**

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No. If you stop taking your buspirone, your original symptoms may return. To reduce the chances of becoming anxious again you may need to take buspirone every day for a long time. This is not harmful. You and your doctor or prescriber should decide when you can come off it.

## **What about alcohol?**

It is recommended that you should not drink alcohol while taking buspirone. This is because both buspirone and alcohol can cause drowsiness and dizziness. If combined, this drowsiness and dizziness could be severe. This can lead to falls or accidents.

Once people are used to taking buspirone, they can sometimes drink alcohol in small amounts without any harm. Avoid alcohol altogether for the first one or two months. After this, if you want a drink, try a glass of your normal drink and see how you feel. If this doesn’t make you drowsy or dizzy, then it is probably okay to drink small amounts.

It pays to be very cautious because alcohol affects people in different ways, especially when they are taking medication. Don’t stop taking your medication because you fancy a drink. If you do drink alcohol, drink only small amounts. Never drink alcohol and drive. Discuss any concerns you have with your doctor, pharmacist or nurse.

## Can I do anything else to help myself?

Yes. Many people find joining a self-help group useful. Listening to others who have had similar problems can often help. There are many books on anxiety. Relaxation and breathing exercises can usually relieve tension. Ask your doctor, nurse or pharmacist for advice.

Side effects	What is it?	What should I do if this happens to me?
<b>COMMON</b>		
Dizziness	Feeling light headed, faint, unsteady or confused.	Don't stand up too quickly. Try and sit or lie down when you feel it coming on. Don't drive.
Drowsiness	Feeling sleepy or sluggish.	Avoid tasks you need to be alert for such as driving or using machines. Discuss with your doctor.
Nausea	Feeling like you may vomit.	Taking each dose of medication with or after food may help. Small frequent meals may also be helpful. If it is bad, discuss with your doctor.
Headache	When your head is pounding and painful	You can take paracetamol for this. Discuss with your doctor if it does not improve.
<b>UNCOMMON</b>		
Blurred Vision	Things look fuzzy and you can't focus properly.	Contact your doctor if this continues to be a problem.
<b>VERY RARE</b>		
Allergic reaction	A sudden onset of skin rash, itching, swelling of your face, lips and tongue, or difficulty breathing	Contact your doctor or the emergency department immediately.
Serotonin Syndrome. This may occur in combination with another medication (e.g. antidepressants, tramadol)	Feeling confused, restless, sweating, shaking, shivering, hallucinations (strange visions or sounds), sudden jerks of your muscles or a fast heartbeat.	Stop taking your buspirone and contact your doctor or the emergency department immediately.

**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.**

Hillmorton Hospital Pharmacy

Annex Road, Christchurch

Telephone: (03) 339 1169