

# Venlafaxine (Effexor®)



## Dementia Drug Education Handout

<b>Why is this drug used?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To treat behavioral symptoms associated with Alzheimer's Disease</li> </ul>
<b>Typical dosing:</b>	<p><b>1. Tablet, immediate release:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Begin with 75 mg daily divided into 2 - 3 doses.</li> <li>May increase by 75 mg every 4 days if no significant side effects.</li> <li>Maximum daily dose is 375 mg.</li> </ul> <p><b>2. Capsule or Tablet, extended release:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Begin with 37.5 - 75 mg daily divided into 2 - 3 doses.</li> <li>May increase by 75 mg every 4 - 7 days if no significant side effects.</li> <li>Maximum daily dose is 225 mg.</li> </ul>
<b>Available Formulations &amp; Estimated Cost:</b>	<p><b>1. Tablet, immediate release (generic only):</b>  <u>Strengths:</u> 25 mg, 37.5 mg, 50 mg, 75 mg, 100 mg  <u>Cost (30 day supply):</u> \$195 - \$230</p> <p><b>2. Tablet, extended release (generic only):</b>  <u>Strengths:</u> 37.5 mg, 75 mg, 150 mg, 225 mg  <u>Cost (30 day supply):</u> \$60 - \$70</p> <p><b>3. Capsule, extended release (brand &amp; generic):</b>  <u>Strengths:</u> 37.5 mg, 75 mg, 150 mg  <u>Cost (30 day supply):</u> Generic \$125 - \$150; Brand \$240 - \$295</p>
<b>Contraindications &amp; Precautions for this drug:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hypersensitivity to venlafaxine. May include: swelling, rash, hives.</li> <li>Use of MAOI (phenelzine, procarbazine, hydracarbazine, isoniazid, nialamide, isocarboxazid, trancycypromine, moclobemide, pirlindole, toloxatone, rasagiline, selegiline) now or in the last 14 days</li> <li>Use of linezolid or IV methylene blue.</li> </ul>
<b>Common Side Effects:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Headache</li> <li>Sweating a lot</li> <li>Dry mouth</li> <li>Insomnia</li> <li>Weight loss</li> <li>Abnormal ejaculation</li> <li>Drowsiness</li> <li>Nausea</li> <li>Muscle weakness</li> <li>Dizziness</li> </ul>

<b>Managing this medication:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Take this drug at the same time each day.</li><li>2. Take it with food and a full glass of water.</li><li>3. Do not chew, break, or crush tablet or capsule.</li><li>4. <i>Inform your health-care provider if you experience:</i> suicidal thoughts, unable to think clearly, abnormal bleeding (coughing up blood, blood in urine, bleeding from gums, bleeding that won't stop), change in the way you act, very bad headache, very nervous and excitable, seizures, chest pain, shortness of breath, cough, bone pain, change in sex ability, hallucinations, fast heartbeat, or other side effects.</li></ol>
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#### References:

1. Lexicomp – venlafaxine, Effexor®
2. Red Book Average Wholesale Price of Drugs 2013
3. Kirby Lee, PharmD, MA, MAS and Ron Finley, RPh, UCSF Memory and Aging Center

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