

Agomelatine (pron. Ag-o-mella-teen)

What is agomelatine used for?

Agomelatine (also known as Valdoxan[®]) is mainly used to help treat the symptoms of depression. It is made as tablets.

What is the usual dose of agomelatine?

The usual dose of agomelatine is 25mg once day at bedtime, although some people need 50mg a day.

How should I take agomelatine?

Swallow the tablets with at least half a glass of water whilst sitting or standing. This is to make sure that they reach the stomach and do not stick in your throat.

When should I take agomelatine?

Take your agomelatine at night. If you are a shift-worker, take your agomelatine at bedtime. There is no problem about taking agomelatine before, with, or after food.

What are the alternatives to agomelatine?

There are many other medicines (e.g. SSRIs, mirtazapine, venlafaxine) and talking therapies for depression. See our website and "Handy chart" to help you compare the medicines, how they work and their side effects.

How long will agomelatine take to work?

For depression, it seems that agomelatine either works or it doesn't. You should usually know within about four weeks if it has worked. If it has not started working in two weeks, the dose may be increased from 25mg (one tablet) at night to 50mg (two tablets) at night. Then give it another two weeks.

How long will I need to keep taking agomelatine for?

- For a first episode of depression, your chances of becoming depressed again are much lower if you keep taking the antidepressant for six months after you have got better
- For a second episode, your chances of becoming depressed again are lower if you keep taking the antidepressant for one or two years after you have got better
- For depression that keeps coming back, taking an antidepressant for at least 5 years has been shown to reduce the chances of depression coming back. Some people say you should have a good reason to stop an antidepressant if you get depression regularly.

Is agomelatine addictive?

Agomelatine is not addictive.

Can I stop taking agomelatine suddenly?

There is no problem stopping agomelatine suddenly. However, you should make sure you have taken agomelatine long enough, even if you feel better, because your depression can return if treatment is stopped too early.

What should I do if I forget to take a dose of agomelatine?

Start again as soon as you remember. If you forget a dose one night, there is no point in taking it next morning so just wait until the next evening. If you have problems remembering your doses (as many people do) ask your pharmacist, doctor or nurse about this. There are some special packs, boxes and devices which can be used to help you remember.

Can I drink alcohol while I am taking agomelatine?

It is not thought that alcohol will make the side effects of agomelatine worse.

Will agomelatine affect my other medication?

Agomelatine has very few drug interactions. The effects of agomelatine can sometimes be increased by fluvoxamine (an unlikely combination) and ciprofloxacin (an antibiotic). It does not necessarily mean that this will happen, just that you may need to follow your doctor's instructions carefully.

If I am taking a contraceptive pill, will this be affected by taking agomelatine?

You should have no problems with "The Contraceptive Pill" and agomelatine.

What sort of side-effects might occur if I am taking agomelatine?

The table below shows you some of the side effects you might get from agomelatine.

Side effect	What happens	What to do about it
COMMON <i>(less than about 1 in 10 people might get these)</i>		
Dizziness	Feeling dizzy an hour or so after your evening dose	Take the evening dose just before you go to bed. The effect usually wears off in a couple of weeks.
UNCOMMON <i>(less than about 1 in 100 people might get these)</i>		
Raised LFTs	An increase in some tests of your liver	This happens in about 1 in 250 people, has no symptoms and usually wears off in a few weeks.

Do not be worried by this list of side effects. Some people get no side effects at all and others may get some effects that are not listed in this table. If you think you might have a side effect to your medicine, you should ask your doctor, nurse or pharmacist. If you want to know more, go to our website for links to other websites with more information.

Will agomelatine cause me to put on weight?

Agomelatine does not usually cause changes in weight. If you do start to put on weight or have problems with your weight, your doctor can arrange for you to see a dietician for advice. Any weight you put on can be controlled while you are still taking this medication, with expert advice about diet.

Will agomelatine affect my sex life?

Medicines can affect desire (libido), arousal (erection) and orgasm. Agomelatine is not thought to affect any of these three stages. Lack of desire and impotence has been reported rarely. If this does seem to have happened, you should discuss this with your doctor. Any problem will go away if the agomelatine is stopped.

Will I need a blood test if I am taking agomelatine?

You will need a blood test when you start agomelatine, after 6 weeks, 12 weeks and 6 months. This is because about 1 in 250 people have a slight rise in LFTs (liver function tests). This is almost certainly not a problem but as agomelatine is fairly new, until it is proven to be safe these tests are needed.

Can I drive or cycle while I am taking agomelatine?

Agomelatine should not affect your ability to drive, but it can cause a little dizziness and lightheadedness. So, until you know how agomelatine affects you, be careful about driving or operate machinery. You should be careful as it may slow down your reaction times.

The small print: This leaflet is to help you understand about your medicine. You should also read the manufacturer's Patient Information Leaflet (PIL). You may find lots more on the internet but beware as internet-based information is not always accurate. Do not share medicines with anyone else. Go to our website for fuller answers to these and many other questions e.g. driving, women's health, how it works, doses and interactions, and about the conditions. The "Handy charts" will help you compare the main medicines for each condition, how they work and their side effects.