

Sertindole (pron. Sir-tin-dole)

What is sertindole used for?

Sertindole (also known as Serdolect[®]) is mainly used to help treat the symptoms of schizophrenia and to prevent these symptoms coming back, where at least one other antipsychotic hasn't helped. It is one of a group of medicines called antipsychotics or neuroleptics. It is made as tablets.

What is the usual dose of sertindole?

The usual starting dose of sertindole is 4mg a day. This is then increased by 4mg a day every 4-5 days. The usual long-term dose is 12-20mg a day.

How should I take sertindole?

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 sertindole?

Take your sertindole once a day as on the medicine label. Taking it at mealtimes may make it easier for you to remember as there is no problem about taking sertindole with or after food. Take it at the same time every day.

What are the alternatives to sertindole?

There are many other antipsychotics, talking therapies and treatments for schizophrenia. See our website and "Handy chart" to help you compare the medicines, how they work and their side effects.

How long will sertindole take to work?

The effect usually starts in a week or two, and builds over several weeks. Please see our website for more help and advice on how long you might need to take it for before it works.

How long will I need to keep taking sertindole for?

If you get on well with sertindole, you may be best taking it for many years.

Is sertindole addictive?

Sertindole is not addictive.

Can I stop taking sertindole suddenly?

It is unwise to stop taking it suddenly, even if you feel better. Your symptoms can return if treatment is stopped too early. This may occur some weeks or even months after sertindole has been stopped. When the time comes, you should withdraw sertindole by a gradual reduction in the dose over several weeks. You should discuss this fully with your doctor, nurse or pharmacist.

What should I do if I forget to take sertindole?

Start again as soon as you remember if within about 12 hours. After this just take the next dose as normal. Do not try to catch up by taking two doses at once as you may get more side-effects. If you miss more than 7 days doses then you will need to start again from a low dose. If you go straight back on the full dose after a week's break you might get postural hypotension (see side effects) badly, which could be dangerous. 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 that can be used to help you remember.

Can I drink alcohol while I am taking sertindole?

If you drink alcohol while taking sertindole it may make you feel more sleepy. This is particularly important if you need to drive or operate machinery and you must seek advice on this.

Will sertindole affect my other medication?

Sertindole has a few interactions with other medicines:

- Sertindole should not be taken with any other medicine that might affect the heart. This can include some other antipsychotics, tricyclics (e.g. amitriptyline, lofepramine), some antibiotics, heart medicines, methadone and some other medicines.
- The effects of sertindole can sometimes be increased by cimetidine, fluoxetine, treatments for HIV, itraconazole, ketoconazole, erythromycin, paroxetine and quinidine
- The effect of sertindole can be decreased by carbamazepine
- You should have no problems with "The Contraceptive Pill" and sertindole

- If sertindole is taken with benzodiazepines (e.g. diazepam, lorazepam, temazepam), or alcohol, it may cause more sleepiness.

Not all of these interactions happen in everyone. Some of these medicines can still be used together but you will need to follow your doctor's instructions carefully. There are many other possible drug interactions.

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

The table below will show you some of the main side effects you might get from sertindole.

Side effect	What happens	What to do about it
COMMON (<i>more than about 1 in 10 people might get these</i>)		
Rhinitis	Your nose feels blocked and may be runny	You can use decongestant nose drops for up to a week. You can buy them from your pharmacist.
Reduced ejaculatory volume	When you climax or "come", the amount of semen is less than normal	This does not affect your chances of having children or any other parts of sexual function. If you are worried, talk to your doctor.
Postural hypotension	A low blood pressure - this can make you feel dizzy when you stand up.	This usually only happens when you start sertindole. It should wear off in a few weeks. Try not to stand up too quickly. If you feel dizzy, don't drive.
UNCOMMON (<i>less than about 1 in 10 people might get these</i>)		
Dry mouth	Not much saliva or spit.	Suck sugar-free gum or boiled sweets. If it is bad, your doctor may be able to give you a mouth spray.
Peripheral or ankle oedema	When your ankles swell up.	Discuss with your doctor.
RARE (<i>less than about 1 in 100 people might get these</i>)		
Weight gain	Eating more and putting on weight.	A diet full of vegetables and fibre may help prevent weight gain.
Dyspnoea	Finding it hard to breathe	Discuss this with your doctor.
Paraesthesia	Feels like "pins and needles"	This should wear off in a day or so. If not, discuss with your doctor.
Movement disorders (extra-pyramidal side effects)	Having shaky hands. Your eyes and tongue may move on their own. You may feel very restless, or stiff.	It is not usually dangerous but is a well known side effect. If it is distressing or worries you, tell your doctor. He or she may be able to give you a medicine for it e.g. an anticholinergic.
QTc prolongation	Unexpected dizziness, palpitations, vertigo, sudden fainting	See your doctor for a heart check up straight away.

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 I need any blood or other tests if I am taking sertindole?

You will need a test on your heart (an ECG) before you start sertindole, then after about 3 weeks, at 3 months then at least every year, plus when ever your dose changes if any other medicines change. You may also need a blood test to check on the salts in your blood, and your blood pressure checked while your dose is increasing.

Can I drive or cycle while I am taking sertindole?

You may feel a bit sleepy at first when taking sertindole. You should be careful as it may slow down your reaction times. Until this wears off, or you know how sertindole affects you, do not drive or operate machinery.

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.