

Trazodone (pron. traz-o-doan)

What is trazodone used for?

Trazodone (also known as Molidaxin[®]) is mainly used to help treat the symptoms of depression. It can also be used to help treat the symptoms of anxiety and, as it is quite sedative, can help you get to sleep. It is available as tablets, capsules and a liquid.

What is the usual dose of trazodone?

The usual dose of trazodone is around 100-300mg at bedtime for depression.

How should I take trazodone?

Swallow the tablets or capsule 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. For the liquid, use a medicine spoon, dropper or oral syringe. Use it carefully to make sure you measure the correct amount.

When should I take trazodone?

Take your trazodone as directed on the medicine label. Taking it at mealtimes may make it easier for you to remember as there is no problem about taking trazodone with or after food. If the label says to take it once a day this is usually best at bedtime.

What are the alternatives to trazodone?

This will depend on what you are taking it for. There are many other medicines, talking therapies and treatments for depression or insomnia. See our "Handy charts" to help you compare the medicines, how they work and their side effects.

How long will trazodone take to work?

This will depend on what you are taking it for. For depression, the effect will start in a week or two, and carry on building for the next few weeks. Please see one of our "Handy charts" more help and advice.

How long will I need to keep taking trazodone for?

This will depend on what you are taking it for. Please look at one of the "Handy charts" for more help and advice.

Is trazodone addictive?

Trazodone is not addictive as such, but if you stop it suddenly you may get some discontinuation effects. This is not very common with trazodone. At worst, these could include headache, restlessness, diarrhoea, nausea, 'flu-like symptoms, lethargy, abdominal cramps, sleep disturbance and mild movement disorders. They can start shortly after stopping or reducing doses, are usually short lived, will go if trazodone is started again and can even occur with missed doses.

Can I stop taking trazodone 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 months after trazodone has been stopped. When the time comes, you should stop trazodone by a gradual reduction in the dose over several weeks. Discuss this fully with your doctor.

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

Take the missed dose as soon as you remember unless it is within about 12 hours of your next dose. If you remember 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 have problems remembering your doses (as very many people do) ask your pharmacist, doctor or nurse about this. There are some special packs that can be used to help you remember.

Will trazodone affect my other medication?

Trazodone has only a few interactions with other medicines:

- If trazodone is taken with benzodiazepines, sleeping tablets or alcohol, it may cause more sleepiness.
- If trazodone is taken with other medicines also boosting serotonin, you can get some 'flu-like symptoms. You should contact your nurse, doctor or pharmacist straight away if this happens
- Trazodone can increase the effect of warfarin (for thinning blood)
- The effects of trazodone can be increased by clarithromycin (an antibiotic)
- You should have no problems with "The Contraceptive Pill" and trazodone.

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.

Can I drink alcohol while I am taking trazodone?

If you drink alcohol while taking trazodone 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.

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

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

Side effect	What happens	What to do about it
VERY COMMON (<i>more than about 1 in 10 people might get these</i>)		
Nausea and vomiting	Feeling sick and being sick.	Take trazodone after food. If you are sick for more than a day, contact your doctor. This tends to wear off after a few days or a week or so.
Insomnia	Not being able to get to sleep at night.	Discuss with your doctor. He or she may change the time of your dose, or reduce the dose a little to start with.
Sexual dysfunction	Finding it hard to have an orgasm. No desire for sex.	Discuss with your doctor.
Sleepiness	Feeling sleepy or sluggish. It can last for a few hours after taking your dose.	Don't drive or use machinery. Ask your doctor if you can take trazodone at a different time of day, or take it at bedtime.
COMMON (<i>less than about 1 in 10 people might get these</i>)		
Headache	Your head is pounding and painful.	Try paracetamol.
Loss of appetite	Not feeling hungry. You may lose weight.	If this is a problem, contact your doctor or chemist for advice.
Diarrhoea	Going to the toilet more than usual and passing loose, watery stools.	Drink plenty of water. Get advice from your pharmacist. If it lasts for more than a day, contact your doctor.
UNCOMMON (<i>less than about 1 in 100 people might get these</i>)		
Restlessness or anxiety	Feeling more on edge. You may sweat a lot more.	Try and relax by taking deep breaths. Wear loose fitting clothes. This often happens early on in treatment and should gradually ease off over several weeks. A lower starting dose may help sometimes.
RARE (<i>less than about 1 in 1000 people might get these</i>)		
Rashes and pruritis	Rashes or blotches anywhere on the skin. These may be itchy.	Stop taking it and contact your doctor now.
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.
Tremors and dystonias	Feeling shaky. You may get a twitch or feel stiff.	It is not dangerous. If it troubles you, contact your doctor.

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 a blood test if I am taking trazodone?

You should not need any blood tests with trazodone.

Can I drive or cycle while I am taking trazodone?

You may feel a bit sleepy at first when taking trazodone. You should be careful as it may slow down your reaction times. Until this wears off, or you know how trazodone 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.