

Antidepressant Medications



Taking medication for depression may be an effective treatment for you.

Learn more about antidepressant medications with these questions and answers:

Question	Answer
How do antidepressants work?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Help restore the natural balance of chemicals in the brain that affect your mood (called neurotransmitters)• Not entirely understood, but do improve mood for many
Are they addictive?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• They are not addictive and they do not provide a “high”
Will I get better if I take an antidepressant?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Between 50% and 65% of people with depression improve with medication• If you do not feel better after trying one medication, there is a good chance that you will respond better to another• Counseling plus medication may be more effective than medications alone
How long will it take to work?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Most start to feel better in 2 to 6 weeks. Sleep and appetite usually improve first; it may take longer for your mood and energy to improve.• If you do not feel better after 6 weeks, your doctor may want to increase the amount of the medication or switch you to another one• You may feel side effects from the medication before the benefits—many side effects will go away
Can I stop the medication once I start feeling better?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Talk to your doctor before stopping medication; some medications must be stopped gradually to give your body time to adjust• If you stop taking it too soon, you may be at high risk of having your depression return



Question	Answer
My problem is poor sleep, how can antidepressants help?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Poor sleep can be a symptom of depression• Some types of antidepressants can help with sleep
I have low energy and feel tired a lot, can antidepressants help?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Low energy and fatigue is common with depression• Some types of antidepressants can help with low energy• When depression is treated, you should feel less tired and more able to do your usual activities
I have a lot of stress in my life, can antidepressants help?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Life stress can cause or worsen the symptoms of depression. The depression can then make it harder to deal with other stress.• Treating depression can help you better cope with stress
I have anxiety or panic attacks, not depression. How can antidepressants help?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Many times, anxiety and depression occur together• Antidepressant medications are among the most effective treatments for anxiety
Are there any side effects?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Side effects may be mild and worth the inconvenience• Ask your doctor what to expect and what to do if you have a problem• If side effects continue, your doctor may lower the dose, add another medication, or change medications
Does anything interfere with antidepressant medications?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tell your doctor if you take any herbs, supplements, drink alcohol, or use non-prescribed drugs• Your doctor will ensure all your medications work together for your well being and safety