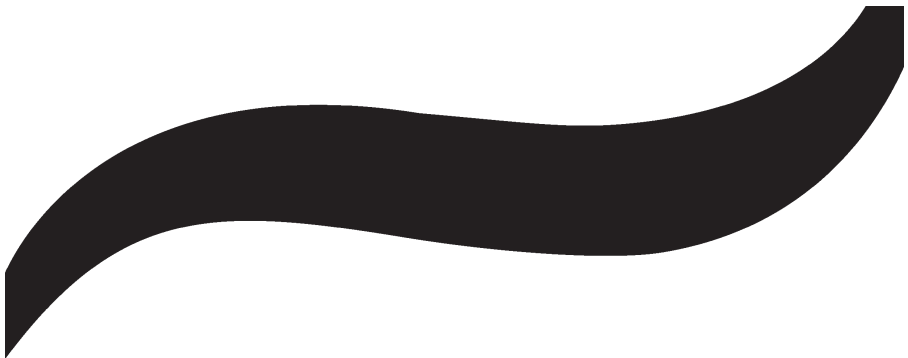




Duloxetine

Information for patients
Prescribing Management Team
Kirklands Hospital



WHAT IS DULOXETINE?

Duloxetine belongs to the group of medications called antidepressants. These medicines are also useful for neuropathic (nerve) pain. You have not been given this medication to treat depression. If you, your doctor, pharmacist or pain specialist thinks you have depression this should be discussed separately.

WHAT IS NERVE PAIN?

Nerve pain usually follows after damage to a nerve. It is thought to result from a “rewiring” of the nerves of the spinal cord that become too sensitive and send too many pain signals. Normal touch can feel painful. There is often a “burning” or “shooting” feeling, or pins and needles. The pain can be there all the time, or can come and go.

WHAT DOSE SHOULD I TAKE?

Duloxetine is available as 30mg and 60mg capsules. Your doctor, pharmacist or pain specialist will tell you what dose to take.

A usual starting dose would be 30mg or 60mg daily. It may take up to four weeks for it to start helping reduce, or manage the pain you feel.

You should take this medication regularly at the same time each day. It should be swallowed whole with a glass of water.

HOW LONG WILL I HAVE TO TAKE DULOXETINE FOR?

If this is an effective medicine for you, you may need to take it as long as you are requiring relief for nerve pain. Sometimes when duloxetine has been taken for a long time it may not work as well. If you, your doctor, pharmacist or pain specialist think this is happening they may reduce the dose slowly to see if you still need it.

Do not stop duloxetine suddenly if you have been taking it for a long time as this may cause withdrawal symptoms. Reducing the dose slowly will help stop this happening.

ARE THERE ANY SIDE EFFECTS?

All medicines can cause side effects but not everyone will get them. There is a full list in the patient information sheet with your prescription.

Some side effects can be reduced by slowly building up the dose and others may pass after the first few doses. If side effects go on, or you have others not expected then speak to your doctor, pain specialist or pharmacist.

Common side effects are feeling sick, headache, dry mouth, sleepiness and dizziness.

If duloxetine makes you feel drowsy you should avoid driving or operating machinery. It is a criminal offence to drive a vehicle whilst unsafe due to medication use. This might be worse when you start the medication and each time your dose goes up. Alcohol may make the sleepiness worse and should be avoided where possible.

Less common side effects include loss of appetite, flushes, raised blood pressure, sleeping problems, feeling anxious or sweating.

If you experience an allergic reaction, eye problems, or suicidal thoughts, let your doctor, pharmacist or pain specialist know.

INTERACTION WITH OTHER MEDICATIONS

Duloxetine is known to cause increased side effects if taken with other medicines which include, tramadol, St John's wort and anti-depressants.

Do not buy other medications without telling the pharmacist that you are taking duloxetine.

MEDICATION IN CHRONIC PAIN

The benefit from taking medication should always be more than any side effects you may have. Only you:

- ❖ know how bad your pain is
- ❖ are able to say if your medicine is helping
- ❖ know what side effects you are having

It may take a few weeks or several trials of different medications to find the best combination for you and your pain. It may help to keep a diary of your pain and other symptoms. Side effects often become less once you have been on a medicine for a few days.

Your doctor, pharmacist or pain specialist can give you advice on which pain medicines may help. They can help you find the best way to take your medicines. They can advise you on putting your dose up safely if your pain is worse and on taking less medication safely when your pain is less.

If your medicine is not helping, you may not need to take it. Please talk to your doctor, pharmacist or pain specialist first. Some pain medicines should not be stopped suddenly.

Do not share or take other peoples medication. Always advise your doctor, pharmacist or pain specialist about any other medication or products you are taking for chronic pain. This includes anything bought from the pharmacy, herbal supplements or non-prescribed medicines.

Understanding how your medications work may help you to get the best pain relief from it with the least side-effects.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND THE USE OF PATIENT INFORMATION

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