

Trazodone

(pronounced traz – a – done)

Why has trazodone been prescribed?

Trazodone is an antidepressant. This medication is prescribed to treat depression and other mood disorders such as anxiety.

What are the benefits of taking trazodone?

Antidepressants are effective in reducing the severity of the symptoms of depression. They also shorten the time to recovery and prevent depression returning.

Are there any precautions with trazodone?

Trazodone is suitable for most people. As with all medicines, however, there are precautions. Your prescriber will usually check that it is safe to prescribe trazodone, but let your prescriber know if any of the following apply to you, as extra care may be needed:

- a) if you have epilepsy, glaucoma or suffer from heart, liver, kidney, thyroid trouble.
- b) if you are taking any other medication for schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, medication for anxiety or insomnia, carbamazepine, anticoagulants such as warfarin or antidepressants. Also, tell your prescriber if you buy any medicine 'over the counter' from a pharmacy or supermarket. Please also tell your prescriber if you take any alternative or complementary medicine such as Chinese herbal medicines. St John's Wort should not be taken by patients prescribed trazodone.
- c) if you are pregnant, breast feeding, or wish to become pregnant.
- d) If you have an intolerance to lactose as this is an ingredients in trazodone capsules and tablets (but not the liquid).

What is the usual dose of trazodone?

The starting dose is usually 150mg a day. This may sometimes be increased after several weeks. The usual daily dose of trazodone may be between 75mg and 600mg depending on the condition for which it has been prescribed.

How should trazodone be taken?

Trazodone is usually taken twice a day, after food or as a single dose at bedtime. However, you and your prescriber may decide that it is better for you to take the medicine at another time.

What form does trazodone come in?

Trazodone is available as capsules, tablets and liquid. The capsules are available as 50mg and 100mg and the tablets as 150mg. The liquid is available as 50mg per 5ml.

What should be done if a dose is missed?

If you forget a dose, take it as soon as you remember. If you miss a whole day's dose – just carry on as normal with the next due dose. If you miss more than a day's dose, speak to your prescriber.

What will happen when trazodone is first taken?

Trazodone, like many medicines, does not work straight away. For example, it may take several days or even weeks for some symptoms to improve. To begin with, some people find that trazodone may help them feel more calm and relaxed. Later, (usually in two to three weeks) other symptoms should begin to improve. Many people do not experience any side effects. However some people may experience some side effects. We have listed potential side effects in the table below, whether or not they are likely to be short or long-term and what measures can be taken is also described. There are other possible side effects – we have listed only the most important ones. Ask your doctor, pharmacist or nurse if you are worried about anything else that you think might be a side effect. Further information on side effects is available in the official manufacturer's leaflet.

Reporting side effects

The 'Yellow Card' scheme encourages patients to report any side effects that they feel may be caused by their medication. Ask your doctor, pharmacist or nurse for the forms if you wish to report any side effects. Alternatively, telephone 0800 100 3352 or go to www.mhra.gov.uk.

Is trazodone addictive?

Trazodone is not addictive, but if you stop taking the medicine suddenly, you may experience unpleasant physical feelings. Symptoms include nausea, insomnia, anxiety and dizziness.

What about alcohol?

It is recommended that people taking trazodone should not drink alcohol. This is because both antidepressants and alcohol can cause drowsiness. If the two are taken together, severe drowsiness can result. This can lead to falls and accidents. As well as this, drinking alcohol may make depression and anxiety worse. However, once people are used to taking medication, then *very small amounts* of alcohol may not be harmful. It pays to be very careful, because alcohol affects people in different ways, especially when they are taking medication. Never drink alcohol and drive. Discuss any concerns you may have with your doctor, pharmacist or nurse.

Is it OK to stop taking trazodone when symptoms go away?

No. If you stop taking trazodone your original symptoms are very likely to return. Most people need to remain on trazodone for at least six months after they have fully recovered. You should always discuss with your prescriber any plans you have to reduce or stop any of your prescribed medicines.

Are there any alternatives to trazodone?

Yes, there are alternatives available. Although antidepressants have broadly similar therapeutic effects they differ in the side effects they produce. There are more than 20 antidepressants available so most people can find one which suits them. Psychological therapies can also help in some types of depression, either as an alternative to medication or alongside it.

Summary of side effects

Side effect	Side effect
<p>Drowsiness – Very Common</p> <p>What can be done about it? This should wear off within a few days or weeks. Discuss with your prescriber if this persists. Taking the medication at night-time may help, but beware of drowsiness in the following morning.</p> 	<p>Dizziness - Common</p> <p>What can be done about it? Usually occurs when going from sitting to standing. Take more time. Tell your prescriber if this persists.</p> 
(Other less common) side effects	How common is it and what can be done about it?
Headache	Uncommon This should wear off within a few days. Paracetamol can be taken but discuss with your prescriber if this persists
Nausea and vomiting	Uncommon This should wear off within a few days. Taking the medication with food may help. Discuss with your prescriber if this persists.
Constipation	Uncommon Eat lots of fibre – fruit and vegetables are good sources. Drink plenty of fluids. Your prescriber may prescribe a laxative.
Anxiety or restlessness – feeling worried and agitated	Rare This should wear off within a few days. Discuss with your prescriber if this persists.
Dry mouth	Rare This should wear off within a few days. Sugar-free boiled sweets, chewing gum or eating citrus fruits may help. Discuss with your prescriber if this persists.
Priapism (long lasting painful erection)	Rare Stop taking trazodone. Contact your prescriber straightaway.
Rash	Rare Stop taking trazodone. Contact your doctor, pharmacist or nurse for advice.

Very common = almost everyone affected Common = many people affected Uncommon = some people affected
Rare = few people affected Very rare = very few or no one affected

Disclaimer

This leaflet is to help you understand more about your medication. This is not an official manufacturer's Patient Information Leaflet (see <http://www.medicines.org.uk/emc/>). Remember, leaflets like this can only describe some of the effects of medication. You may also find other books or leaflets useful. If you have access to the internet you may find a lot of information there as well, but be careful, as internet based information is not always accurate. If in doubt consult your GP or a health care professional.

This leaflet has been supplied by:

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