

# Venlafaxine (Efexor) for Menopausal Symptoms

## Patient Information

### Why have you been prescribed Venlafaxine?

Venlafaxine is an antidepressant medication. It has also been shown to be effective at low doses in reducing menopausal hot flushes in some women.

### Before you take Venlafaxine

Tell your doctor if you are already taking any medications such as:

- Anti depressants, including St Johns Wort
- Medication to treat psychiatric conditions such as haloperidol or lithium
- Medications to treat an irregular heart beats such as amiodarone or quinidine

### How to take Venlafaxine

Take with food once a day preferably at the same time. Do not divide, crush, chew or place capsules in water.

Start the dose at 37.5mg per day for four to seven days and then increase up to 75mg per day.

### Side effects

Common side effects include:

- Fainting or dizziness
- Loss of appetite
- Nausea

- Diarrhoea
- Feeling sedated or drowsy
- Difficulty sleeping or abnormal dreams
- Feeling of apathy or not caring about things
- Dry mouth

**Note:** this is not a complete list of all possible side effects. Tell your doctor if you notice anything else that is making you feel unwell, even if it is not on the list.

### When will you see an improvement in symptoms?

Symptom relief usually occurs within seven days.

### How to stop taking Venlafaxine

If taking the medication for longer than six weeks, taper the dose over a period of two weeks by reducing the dose to 37.5 mg per day for seven days then stop.

**If you experience any side effects from reducing the treatment please see your GP or contact the Menopause/MSAC Clinics on (08) 9340 1355 or (08) 9340 2222 pager 3358 (Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday only).**

This information is available in alternative formats upon request

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King Edward Memorial Hospital  
374 Bagot Road Subiaco WA 6008  
Telephone: (08) 9340 2222



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