

DULOXETINE

DRUG NAME

Generic: Duloxetine

Class of drug: Serotonin and noradrenaline reuptake inhibitor

Brands in Australia: Duloxecor, Dytrex, Tixol (other generic brands available)

DOSAGE FORM

Available as a 30 mg or 60 mg capsule. Quantity 28.

HOW IT WORKS

It boosts serotonin and noradrenaline, calming down pain messages from nerves to the brain. Often used for painful diabetic neuropathy, fibromyalgia, and musculoskeletal pain.

For depression, this medication is less tolerated than others. For nerve pain, 50% pain relief is possible for 1 in 5.

The onset of action for depression is 2 weeks, and for nerve pain and sleep may be similar. Full benefit may take 4-6 weeks or longer. Do not stop early if you do not feel immediate relief.

DOSAGE & FREQUENCY

Your doctor will advise on your starting dose and guide the dose changes.

- start with _____
- if tolerated, increase to _____ after _____ days
- if necessary, increase by _____ every _____ week(s)
- if successive increases are well tolerated *and bring additional benefit*, continue to titrate up to a maximum of _____
- to be reviewed by your doctor on _____

Often titrated slowly to minimise side effects. May be increased gradually depending on your condition and response.

ROUTE OF ADMINISTRATION

Oral (by mouth) unless otherwise specified.

WHAT ELSE SHOULD I KNOW WHILE TAKING THIS MEDICATION

- Take at the same time each day, usually in the morning.
- Take with food to minimise stomach upsets.
- Do not open, crush or chew capsules.
- Be careful driving or operating machinery until you know how this medicine affects you.
- Do not stop taking this medicine suddenly unless your doctor tells you to.

STORAGE INSTRUCTIONS

Store at room temperature, below 25°C, away from moisture and sunlight. Keep out of reach of children.

DISPOSAL INSTRUCTIONS

Return unused or expired medication to your pharmacy for safe disposal.

MISSED DOSE INSTRUCTIONS

Ask your doctor or pharmacist.

EMERGENCY INSTRUCTIONS

Seek urgent medical help if you:

- Take too much (overdose may cause severe drowsiness, seizures, or heart rhythm changes).
- Experience signs of serotonin syndrome: agitation, confusion, sweating, fever, tremors, muscle stiffness, diarrhoea.
- Develop suicidal thoughts or unusual changes in behaviour.

COMMON SIDE EFFECTS

- Nausea
- Dry mouth
- Drowsiness or trouble sleeping
- Headache
- Dizziness
- Constipation or diarrhoea
- Sweating
- Loss of appetite

SERIOUS SIDE EFFECTS

- Severe mood changes, suicidal thoughts
- Liver problems (yellowing of skin/eyes, dark urine) and bleeding
- Seizures
- Allergic reaction (rash, swelling, difficulty breathing)
- Eye pain, blurred vision
- Severe serotonin syndrome symptoms (as above)

MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES FOR SIDE EFFECTS

- Nausea or stomach upset: Take with food.
- Dry mouth: Chew sugar-free gum, frequent sips of water.
- Constipation: Increase fibre and fluid intake; gentle exercise.
- Drowsiness: Take at night if troublesome.
- Sweating: Wear light clothing, stay hydrated.

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Interactions:

- Avoid alcohol (increases liver risk).
- Caution with other antidepressants, tramadol, St John's Wort, migraine triptans — risk of serotonin syndrome.
- May interact with blood thinners (e.g., warfarin), increasing bleeding risk.

Precautions:

- Not recommended in severe liver disease.
- Use with caution in kidney disease.

- Not usually recommended in pregnancy or breastfeeding unless clearly needed.
- Monitor closely if you have glaucoma, bipolar disorder, or seizure disorders.

Elective surgery advice

- Usually **continued before surgery**, but always tell your surgeon and anaesthetist.
- Sudden stopping can cause withdrawal symptoms (dizziness, nausea, sweating).
- Monitor for **serotonin syndrome risk** if combined with opioid pain medicines used during/after surgery (e.g., tramadol, pethidine, fentanyl).

TITRATION DIARY

Date	Dose Taken	Side Effects	Notes (e.g., sleep, pain relief)