

TAPENTADOL SR

DRUG NAME

Generic: Tapentadol SR

Class of drug: Opioid

Brands in Australia: Palexia SR

DOSAGE FORM

Available as a 50 mg, 100 mg, 150 mg, 200 mg or 250 mg sustained release tablet. Quantity 28.

HOW IT WORKS

Tapentadol works in **two ways**:

- **Opioid action:** attaches to opioid receptors in the brain and spinal cord, reducing pain signals.
- **Noradrenaline reuptake inhibition:** increases levels of noradrenaline, which helps block pain messages in the spinal cord.

This “dual action” may make it effective in nerve-related pain as well as tissue injury pain.

Generally used for moderate to severe chronic pain. Also helpful in both musculoskeletal pain and some types of nerve pain.

Onset of action:

- Pain relief usually starts within **1–2 hours** of the first dose.
- Continuous effect from sustained-release lasts for **12 hours**.

DOSAGE & FREQUENCY

Your doctor will advise on the 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 _____

Always follow your doctor’s instructions — dose is individualised.

ROUTE OF ADMINISTRATION

Oral (by mouth) unless otherwise specified.

WHAT ELSE SHOULD I KNOW WHILE TAKING THIS MEDICATION

- Swallow whole; do not crush or chew.
- Take exactly as prescribed. May be taken with or without food.

- Do not stop suddenly without medical advice.
- This medication may make you feel drowsy and may increase the effects of alcohol. If you are affected, do not drive or operate machinery. If you are very sleepy or have trouble staying awake, stop taking the medication and tell your doctor immediately.
- Be careful when you stand up as this medicine might make you feel dizzy if you stand up too quickly.
- *Chronic use:* look after your teeth and mouth, and get dental checks regularly, as opioids may make your mouth dry which increases risk of dental caries.

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 extreme drowsiness, slow or stopped breathing, unconsciousness).
- Develop severe allergic reaction (rash, swelling, breathing problems).

COMMON SIDE EFFECTS

- Constipation
- Nausea, vomiting
- Drowsiness, dizziness
- Headache
- Sweating
- Dry mouth

SERIOUS SIDE EFFECTS

- Slow or shallow breathing
- Severe drowsiness or confusion
- Seizures
- Suicidal thoughts or mood changes
- Serotonin syndrome (agitation, fever, tremor, diarrhoea, sweating, muscle stiffness) — especially if taken with antidepressants or tramadol.

MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES FOR SIDE EFFECTS

- Constipation: Use stool softeners, increase fibre and fluids.
- Nausea: Take with food.
- Drowsiness: Avoid driving until you know how it affects you.
- Dry mouth: Sip water, chew sugar-free gum.

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Interactions:

- Dangerous with alcohol, sedatives, and benzodiazepines.

- Risk of serotonin syndrome with antidepressants, tramadol, or St John's Wort.
- May interact with other opioids or seizure medicines.

Precautions:

- Use with caution in people with liver or kidney disease.
- Not recommended in severe breathing problems.
- Not usually recommended in pregnancy or breastfeeding.

Elective surgery advice

- Usually continued before surgery.
- Inform your anaesthetist — tapentadol interacts with anaesthetic drugs and opioids.
- There is a risk of serotonin syndrome if combined with serotonergic anaesthetics or analgesics.
- Your surgical team may need to adjust your pain relief plan after surgery.

TITRATION DIARY

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