NATIONWIDE CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL℠

700 Children's Drive
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NationwideChildrens.org

SSRI ANTIDEPRESSANTS
Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors

Antidepressants (anti-de-PRESS-ants) are medicines you to take to relieve sad, hopeless, anxious feelings and eating disorders. SSRI antidepressants increase the level of serotonin in the brain which helps to improve mood, emotional state and the sleep/wake cycle. It may take 4 to 8 weeks to be fully effective in controlling symptoms. These medicines are available only with a prescription.

SOME BRAND NAMES FOR THESE MEDICINES

Prozac® (fluoxetine)
Zoloft® (sertraline)
Luvox® (fluvoxamine)
Paxil® (paroxetine)
Celexa® (citalopram)
Lexapro® (escitalopram)

HOW TO GIVE THIS MEDICINE

- Read the label carefully and make sure you are giving your child the right dose. It is easy to confuse the many different dosage forms and strengths.
- Give the exact dose of medicine that your doctor ordered.
- Stay with your child until he or she has swallowed the dose of medicine.
- It is very important to give the medicine **every day** as ordered, even if your child is feeling fine. Do not change doses or stop the medicine without talking to your child's doctor. **If your child stops taking antidepressant medicine too early it can cause his or her symptoms to get worse. It may cause serious withdrawal-type symptoms.**
- Ask your pharmacist for two labeled bottles if your child's daycare provider or school will be giving this medicine.
- It is important to keep a record of when the medicine is given. You may use a calendar or the Helping Hand: *Medication Record,* HH-V-1.

POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS

- GI complaints
- Headache
- Dizziness
- Anxiety
- Agitation
- Insomnia
- Somnolence
- Sexual dysfunction

WHAT TO DO ABOUT SIDE EFFECTS

- If a skin rash occurs, stop giving the medicine and call your child's doctor.
- If your child becomes drowsy or sleepy, do not let him ride a bike or operate machinery (such as a lawnmower or car), or take part in any activities where he must stay alert and awake.
- This medicine makes your child more sensitive to sunlight. Before going out in the sun, your child should wear a hat and protective clothing, and a sunscreen lotion with a SPF of at least 30. The sunscreen should be applied every 30 minutes if your child is sweating or playing in water.

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WHEN TO CALL THE DOCTOR

Call your child's doctor if signs and symptoms develop that indicate your child's condition is worsening or that he or she may be at risk of self-harm:

- Thoughts about suicide or dying
- Attempts to commit suicide
- Self-injury
- Feeling very agitated or restless
- Panic attacks
- Sleeping problems
- Increasing sadness
- An extreme increase in talking or activity
- Aggression
- Violence or hostility
- New or worsening anxiety
- Social or academic problems at school
- Spending more time alone

WHEN TO CALL FOR EMERGENCY HELP

Call for emergency help if your child has any of these signs of an allergic reaction:

- Trouble breathing
- Swelling of the tongue
- Swelling of hands, feet, or ankles

WARNINGS

In very few cases, children have had an increase in suicidal thoughts or behavior while taking antidepressants, especially within the first weeks after starting the medicine or when changing the dose.

Because of this slight risk and the risk of suicide which can be associated with depression and other psychiatric illnesses, children must be closely monitored by loved ones, caregivers and healthcare providers.

Special note for female patients:

If a patient thinks she might be pregnant, she should tell the doctor before she begins taking this or any medicine. Possible risks to the fetus from this medicine have not been established.

OTHER ADVICE ABOUT THE MEDICINE

- If you carry medicine in your purse, keep it in its childproof bottle and keep your purse out of the reach of children.
- Bring all your child's medicines with you **in the original** bottles whenever your child sees a doctor, goes to an emergency room, or is admitted to the hospital. This helps doctors who may not know your child.
- Learn the name, spelling, and dose of this medicine. Also, teach your child if he is old enough. You will need to know this information when you call your doctor or pharmacist.
- If your child takes too much of this medicine, or if someone else takes this medicine, first call the Central Ohio Poison Center at 1-800-222-1222 (TTY 614-228-2272). They will tell you what to do next.

IF YOU FORGET TO GIVE A DOSE

If you forget to give a dose of this medicine, give it as soon as possible. If it is almost time for the next dose, don't give the missed dose at all. Do not double the next dose. Instead, go back to your regular dosing schedule. If you have any questions about this, check with your child's doctor or pharmacist.

IF A DOSE IS VOMITED

If the medicine is vomited (thrown up), do not repeat the dose. If the vomiting continues, call your child's doctor.

STORAGE OF MEDICINE

- **Store all medicine out of the reach of children.**
- Always keep medicine in the original bottle from the pharmacy.
- Do not use this medicine after the expiration date printed on the container.

SAFETY TIPS

- Tell your doctor and pharmacist if your child has a strange or allergic reaction to any medicine.
- Your child should not drink alcohol. Combining this medicine with alcohol can be dangerous. Check with your doctor or pharmacist before giving non-prescription medicines.
- When the medication is no longer needed, dissolve the leftover medicine in water or rubbing alcohol. Mix the dissolved medication with an unwanted material like coffee grounds, and place the mixture back in the pill container or in another container that will not leak. Throw the container away in the trash where children and pets cannot reach it.

FOLLOW-UP VISITS

- You can expect to have regular follow-up visits with your child's doctor.
- Be sure to call your child's doctor if you can't keep the appointment.
- If you have any questions, be sure to ask your child's doctor, nurse or pharmacist.

QUESTIONS TO ASK THE DOCTOR OR PHARMACIST

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