

Frequently Asked Questions About Medicine for Depression

What kind of medicine helps depression?

Doctors use medicines called “antidepressants” to help people with depression. Antidepressant medicine helps the brain work right by making sure that a person has the right amount of chemicals in the brain.

Will I get better if I take medicine for depression?

Most people who take medicine for depression get better. When a person does not get better on antidepressant medicine it is time to talk to your doctor. Your doctor may want to try increasing the medicine or they may try a different medicine.

Is antidepressant medicine safe?

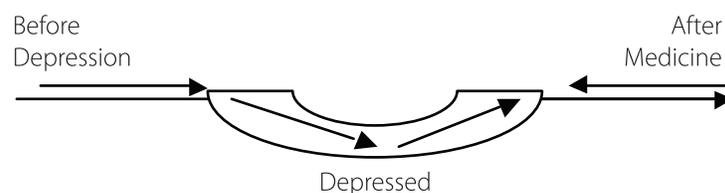
A person may have problems with any medicine. Antidepressant medicines are safe for most people to take. Ask your doctor if you have concerns about taking medicine for depression.

Will I have side effects?

Some people have mild problems like an upset stomach or headache when they first start taking antidepressant medicine. These problems usually go away after a couple of days. You should tell your doctor if you are having any of these problems. Your doctor will probably try a different antidepressant medicine if you continue to have problems.

Will I get “high” or “hooked” on antidepressant medicine?

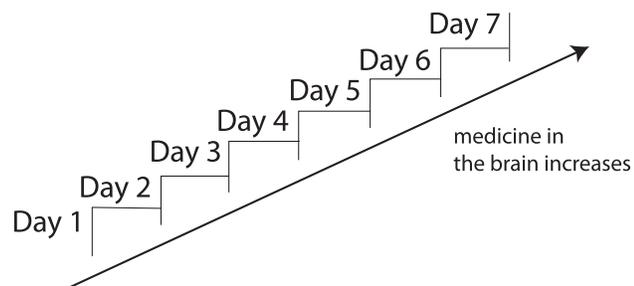
The answer to both is NO! Antidepressant medicine does not make a person feel “high.” A person will feel like they felt before they became depressed when an antidepressant medicine begins to work. Depression makes a person feel like they are down in a deep hole. Medicine will help them feel like they are back to where they were before they became depressed. Also, a person does not get “hooked” on antidepressant medication medicine like you can to street drugs. Sometimes, when a person stops taking antidepressant medicine suddenly, they can feel strange or funny. If you want to stop taking antidepressant medicine, work with your doctor. Your doctor will give you a plan to help you stop your medicine gradually.



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How long does it take for antidepressant medicine to work?

It often takes 2 to 6 weeks before a person starts to feel better on an antidepressant medicine. Antidepressant medicine has to build up day by day over time in the brain. Once enough medicine has built up, the brain begins to work right. Your doctor may want to increase how much medicine you are taking if you do not feel better in 4 to 6 weeks. They might also try a different medicine. You may not notice that you are feeling better at first because the medicine works gradually. Your friends or family might notice positive changes in you before you do. Try to be patient. Getting better takes time.



It can help to rate how you are feeling every week on a scale. For example:

My mood this week has been:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Terrible	_____								Great
The worst I could feel									The best I could feel

MDwise has a worksheet that you can use to keep track of your progress. Be sure to show your worksheet to your doctor or therapist.

How long will I have to take antidepressant medicine?

Doctors suggest that a person stay on antidepressant medicine for 4 to 9 months once you feel better. Every person is different though and some people need to stay on antidepressant medicine for longer. Staying on the antidepressant medicine even after you feel better can keep you from getting depressed again. Talk to your doctor about how long you will need to stay on antidepressant medicine.

What should I do if I forget to take my medicine?

If you forget to take your medicine you should not take a double dose the next day. Just take your medicine the next day the way you normally would.

Can I drink alcohol if I am taking antidepressant medicine?

Talk to your doctor before having drinks with alcohol. Alcohol can cause side effects in some people who take antidepressant medicine.

Compiled from the following sources:

www.mentalhealthamerica.net/go/information/get-info

www.nimh.nih.gov/health/index.shtml