



Understanding Your **DEPRESSION MEDICINE**



When depression becomes severe enough to affect your ability to function in everyday life, antidepressant medications may help. However, for your antidepressant medication to work, you must take it correctly.



Mark Your Calendar

Follow-up appointments with your doctor are important! When you begin a new medicine it's not always clear how the medicine will affect you.

It's important that you follow up with your doctor in the first three months of taking a new medication.

Your doctor will evaluate how well your medicine is working. It's possible your doctor may want to change your dosage or even recommend another medication.

Take all prescribed depression medication for the full treatment period (at least six months or as directed by your doctor).

Watch Out for Side Effects

You may experience minor side effects while taking antidepressant medication such as:

- Nausea
- Dizziness
- Restlessness
- Dry mouth

If you have side effects, talk with your doctor about them. There is also the possibility for more serious side effects such as bizarre behavior, extreme hostility or suicidal thoughts. If this occurs, notify your doctor immediately.

Stick to Your Medicine Schedule

Antidepressant medicine should be taken in the right amount for the right amount of time. These drugs alter the levels of the chemicals in your brain that control your mood. That's why it could be dangerous to skip or change the dose of your medicine on your own. **Most antidepressant medicine takes three to four weeks before you feel the effect.**

You may be tempted to stop your antidepressant medication because you're feeling better. If you stop taking your medication abruptly, it can cause a relapse of your depression or serious withdrawal side effects. Talk to your doctor if you want to stop taking your medication. Your doctor will want to taper you off the medication gradually.

Dangerous Drug Interactions

Some over-the-counter drugs such as allergy medicine or sleep aids, and some prescription pain killers, can cause dangerous drug interactions. Ask your doctor about any potential interactions. Also, never drink alcoholic beverages when taking antidepressant medicines.





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