



**SSRI** (Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors)

**SNRI's** (Serotonin-Norepinephrine Reuptake Inhibitor)

## medications for depression

Depression is a medical condition that goes beyond everyday sadness. Depression may cause serious, long-lasting symptoms, and often disrupts a person's ability to perform routine tasks. The treatment of depression is important; people with untreated depression have a lower quality of life, a higher risk of suicide, and worse physical outcomes if they have any medical conditions besides depression.

SSRIs and SNRIs are both very common classes of drugs used to treat depression. They can help with your symptoms of depression and are generally considered safe and cause very few side effects.

The first thing to keep in mind is that it will take some time to make you feel better. Most SSRI's take from 2 to 6 weeks before you may start to notice an improvement in your symptoms.

During the first few weeks you may experience the following side effects:

- Headache
- Drowsiness and/or dizziness
- Insomnia (trouble sleeping at night)
- Nausea (which may be relieved by taking with food). You may also ask your doctor or pharmacist if your medication may be taken at bedtime.
- Diarrhea or constipation
- Suicidal thoughts

If you have questions on whether or not your symptoms could be a side effect of the SSRI, talk to your pharmacist. Let your doctor know if you are experiencing symptoms that become too much to handle. There may be a better medication for you.

If you experience any of the following side effects, contact your doctor right away, as they may be signs of a more serious side effect known as serotonin syndrome.

- A fast heartbeat (unrelated to physical exercise)
- Shaking or trembling
- Sweating
- Vomiting (with or without diarrhea)
- Rapid eye movements
- Confusion

It is very important that you take your SSRI on a regular basis and never increase or decrease your dose without first discussing with your doctor. If you are told to stop taking your medication by your doctor, ask if you can stop taking it immediately, or if you should gradually decrease your dose over several days. With some of these drugs, stopping it immediately may cause you to develop withdrawal-like symptoms, which could include dizziness, lethargy, headaches, or flu-like symptoms.

Not all of these medications will make you have any of these side effects. That's why it's best to visit with your pharmacist or doctor if you experience any of these side effects during the first few weeks of taking a new medication.

An open and honest conversation with your doctor is the key to feeling better.