

## ARE THERE ANY OTHER EFFECTS?

Most people experience minor or no side effects and it varies from person to person. Usually any side effects go away after a few weeks as the body adjusts to the medication. Common side effects can include:

- Feeling sick
- Vomiting
- Headaches
- Being unable to sit still
- Feeling worried

Some people also report sexual difficulties, such as erection problems in boys and loss of libido in girls. If this happens to you, you should discuss it with your doctor, who may recommend a different antidepressant. Less common side effects include headaches, loose stool, loss of appetite, or feeling drowsy. Always tell your doctor if you notice a rash after starting taking Fluoxetine. Some young people may start feeling more agitated once they start taking Fluoxetine, and some may even feel suicidal or even try to harm or kill themselves. These are rare but serious side effects and you should always let your parents and doctor know.

Please refer to the manufacturer's patient information leaflet that comes with your medicine for more information and the full list of side effects and precautions.

If you have any questions or concerns, talk to your doctor, pharmacist, or other healthcare professional.

### Patient advice and liaison service (PALS)

If you have a compliment, complaint or concern please contact our PALS team on 020 7288 5551 or [whh-tr.whithealthPALS@nhs.net](mailto:whh-tr.whithealthPALS@nhs.net)

If you need a large print, audio or translated copy of this leaflet please contact us on 020 7288 3182. We will try our best to meet your needs.

[Twitter.com/WhitHealth](https://twitter.com/WhitHealth)  
[Facebook.com/WhittingtonHealth](https://facebook.com/WhittingtonHealth)

**Whittington Health NHS Trust**  
Magdala Avenue  
London  
N19 5NF  
Phone: 020 7272 3070  
[www.whittington.nhs.uk](http://www.whittington.nhs.uk)

Date published: 19/02/2019  
Review date: 19/02/2021  
Ref: CYP/CAMHS/FA/01

© Whittington Health  
Please recycle



## Fluoxetine

### A guide for adolescents



## WHAT IS IT FOR?

Fluoxetine belongs to a group of antidepressant medication called SSRIs. SSRI stands for Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitor. They are a group of medicines that are used to treat depression and some other conditions such as bulimia, anxiety, panic disorder, and obsessive-compulsive disorder. Fluoxetine is the most effective SSRI for treating depression in young people.



## WHAT WILL FLUOXETINE DO?

Antidepressants alter the balance of some of the chemicals in the brain (neurotransmitters). Fluoxetine mainly affects a neurotransmitter called serotonin. An altered balance of serotonin and other neurotransmitters is thought to play a part in causing depression and other conditions. Fluoxetine will help you feel a lot better in your mood or less anxious.

## HOW AND WHEN SHOULD I TAKE FLUOXETINE?

It may take 3-4 weeks for Fluoxetine to start working, and sometimes you may need to continue taking your medication for up to six weeks to see its full effect. Your doctor will usually prescribe a small dose to start with, which will then usually go up. When you are prescribed Fluoxetine, you need to be reviewed by a doctor regularly. You need to take your medication every day at the same time, usually in the morning.

## WHEN CAN I STOP?

You usually need to take Fluoxetine for 6 months after your symptoms improve. If you stop too early, your symptoms are more likely to return. It is really important that you do not stop Fluoxetine suddenly and without talking to your doctor. Fluoxetine is not addictive; however, if you come off it suddenly you may experience some unpleasant physical symptoms, like feeling sick, having difficulty sleeping, feeling dizzy, electric sensations in your body or having vivid dreams.

## WHAT IF I MISS A DOSE?

If you miss a dose then take the next dose as soon as you remember it, but do not take two doses in the same day. Let your doctor know if you miss more than one full day.

## WHAT IF I TAKE MORE TABLETS THAN I SHOULD?

You should immediately tell your parents or someone who can help you and go to your local A&E to be checked.



## CAN I DRINK ALCOHOL OR TAKE DRUGS WHEN TAKING FLUOXETINE?

You should avoid alcohol or illicit drugs when you are taking Fluoxetine because this will stop you getting better. Also, having alcohol with Fluoxetine may make you feel very drowsy, and this may cause falls or accidents.

## WHAT ABOUT OTHER MEDICATION?

It is OK to take Paracetamol with Fluoxetine, but if you are taking other kinds of medication every day, you need to let your doctor know, as they may interact with Fluoxetine and change its effect on your body.