

## 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 dry mouth, headaches, loose stool, loss of appetite, or feeling drowsy. Always tell your doctor if you notice your skin turning yellow or becoming itchy.

Some young people may start feeling more agitated 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 your 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.whitthealthPALS@nhs.net](mailto:whh-tr.whitthealthPALS@nhs.net)

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## Sertraline

### A guide for adolescents



## What is it for?

Sertraline belongs to a group of antidepressant medication called SSRIs. SSRI stands for Selective Serotonin Re-uptake Inhibitor. They are a group of medicine that are used to treat depression and anxiety. Sertraline is very effective for treating OCD and anxiety in young people.



## What will Sertraline do?

Antidepressants alter the balance of some of the chemicals in the brain (neurotransmitters). Sertraline 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. Sertraline will help you feel less anxious and a lot better in your mood.

## How and when should I take Sertraline?

It may take 3-4 weeks for Sertraline to start working, and sometimes you may need to continue taking your medication for up to 12 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 taking Sertraline, 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 taking Sertraline?

You usually need to take Sertraline for six 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 Sertraline suddenly and without talking to your doctor. Sertraline 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 of medication.

## What if I take more 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?

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

## What about other medication?

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