

# Medication Information Card

## Sertraline (Sir – tra – leen)

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### Other names for this medication

There are many other names for this medication.

### How this medication is used

This medication helps to improve mood and is used to treat depression. It helps balance chemicals in the brain.

Sertraline also helps improve symptoms of panic and obsessive-compulsive disorder.

It may take up to 4 weeks to get the full effect of this medication.

If you are pregnant or thinking about getting pregnant, talk to your doctor about the risks and benefits of taking this medication.

### How to take this medication

Take this medication exactly as directed by your doctor.

This medication is usually taken once a day with food to avoid an upset stomach.

This medication can affect people in different ways. If the medication makes you sleepy, take it with dinner. If it makes you active, take it with breakfast.

If you miss a dose of this medication, take it as soon as possible. However, if it is almost time for the next dose, skip the missed dose and go back to your regular time. Do not take 2 doses at one time.

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## **How to take this medication (continued)**

Tell your doctor and pharmacist about all the medications or natural or herbal products you take, even the ones you buy without a prescription.

This medication increases the effects of alcohol making you more sleepy, dizzy and lightheaded. Do not drink alcohol such as wine, beer or liquor while taking this medication.

## **While taking this medication you may notice**

- nausea or vomiting
- loss of appetite
- diarrhea or constipation
- drowsiness or dizziness
- dry mouth
- headache
- tiredness or weakness
- shaking
- increased sweating
- trouble sleeping

Most of these side effects will go away as your body gets used to the medication.

To avoid feeling dizzy, get up slowly when you have been sitting or lying down. If you feel dizzy, sit or lie down until you are no longer dizzy, then get up slowly.

Until you know how this medication affects you, do not drive or operate machinery.

To prevent constipation, eat food high in fibre, drink 6 to 8 glasses of liquid each day and exercise regularly. Food high in fibre includes whole grain products, vegetables and fruit.

To help dry mouth, try sucking sugar-free candy or chewing sugar-free gum. Sucking on ice chips also helps if you are not on a limited fluid diet. Good care of your teeth is very important at this time.

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## **Contact your doctor if you notice**

- skin rash or itchy skin
- you feel interested or able to have sex
- restless or excited feelings
- blurred vision
- your heartbeat is faster than normal
- behavioural or emotional changes, including thoughts of self-harm or suicide