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Paroxetine (Seroxat)

Take paroxetine in the morning with your breakfast or a snack.

It may take a few weeks after starting the treatment before you feel the full benefit. Do not stop taking it, feeling it is not helping.

Tell your doctor if you feel that you are not getting any better, or if you experience any troublesome side-effects.

About paroxetine

Type of medicine	A selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor (SSRI) antidepressant
Used for	Adults with depression, anxiety disorders, or obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD)
Also called	Seroxat®
Available as	Tablets and oral liquid medicine

Paroxetine is prescribed for depression, anxiety disorders, and obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD). [Depression](#) can develop for no apparent reason, or it can be triggered by a life event such as a relationship problem, a bereavement, or an illness. An anxiety disorder is a condition where anxiety is a major symptom. [Panic disorder](#), [social anxiety disorder](#), and [post-traumatic stress disorder](#) are all anxiety disorders. [Obsessive-compulsive disorder \(OCD\)](#) is a condition where you have recurring and persistent ideas that make you do repetitive actions.

Brain cells, called neurons, release a number of chemicals which go on to stimulate other neurons. This leads to electrical impulses which result in many functions controlled by the brain. Serotonin is one such chemical in the brain. Once released, it stimulates other neurons and is then taken back up into the neuron cells and recycled. [Selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors \(SSRIs\)](#) like paroxetine increase the amount of circulating serotonin available in your brain. Altering the balance of the chemicals in the brain can help with the symptoms of depression, anxiety disorders, and OCD.

Before taking paroxetine

Some medicines are not suitable for people with certain conditions, and sometimes a medicine may only be used if extra care is taken. For these reasons, before you start taking paroxetine it is important that your doctor knows:

- If you are pregnant, trying for a baby or breastfeeding.
- If you have any problems with the way your liver works, or with the way your kidneys work.
- If you have a heart condition.
- If you have epilepsy.
- If you have high blood sugar levels (diabetes mellitus).
- If you have an eye problem called glaucoma.
- If you have ever had a bleeding disorder.
- If you have ever had abnormally 'high' moods, called mania.
- If you are being treated with electroconvulsive therapy (ECT).
- If you have ever had an allergic reaction to a medicine.
- If you have taken an antidepressant known as a monoamine-oxidase inhibitor (MAOI) within the previous two weeks.
- If you are taking any other medicines. This includes any medicines you are taking which are available to buy without a prescription, as well as herbal and complementary medicines.

How to take paroxetine

- Before you start the treatment, read the manufacturer's printed information leaflet from inside the pack. It will give you more information about paroxetine and will provide you with a full list of the side-effects which you may experience from taking it.
- Take paroxetine exactly as your doctor tells you to. It is prescribed as a once-daily dose, to be taken in the morning. There are several strengths of paroxetine tablets – 10 mg, 20 mg, and 30 mg. Your doctor will tell you which strength is right for you.
- If you are being treated for a panic disorder, your doctor may prescribe a low dose for you to begin with, and then increase it. This is because some people feel anxious during the first two weeks, and slowly increasing the dose helps to reduce this.
- Take paroxetine with a snack or just after eating breakfast, as this will help to reduce the likelihood of you feeling sick as a side-effect. Swallow the tablets with a drink of water.
- If you are taking liquid medicine, it is recommended that you do not take indigestion remedies during the two hours before or during the two hours after you take paroxetine liquid. This is because antacids can reduce the amount of paroxetine your body absorbs.
- If you forget to take a dose, take it as soon as you remember. If you do not remember until the following day, skip the missed dose. Do not take two doses together to make up for a forgotten dose.

Getting the most from your treatment

- You may feel that paroxetine is not working for you straightaway. It can take a week or two after starting the treatment before the effect begins to build up, and 4-6 weeks before you feel the full benefit. Do not stop taking it after a week or two, feeling it is not helping.
- Try to keep your regular appointments with your doctor. This is so your doctor can check on your progress.
- While you are taking paroxetine, you may have thoughts about harming yourself or ending your life. These thoughts may also be associated with your condition. It is very important that you tell your doctor about this if it happens.

- Do not stop taking paroxetine unless your doctor tells you to do so. Stopping treatment suddenly can cause problems and your doctor will probably want you to reduce your dose gradually when this becomes necessary. You should expect that a course of treatment will last for several months. This is normal and helps to prevent your symptoms from recurring.
- If you drink alcohol, ask your doctor for advice. Your doctor is likely to recommend that you do not drink alcohol while you are on paroxetine.
- If you have diabetes, you may need to check your blood glucose more frequently, as paroxetine may affect the levels of sugar in your blood. Your doctor will advise you about this.
- If you buy any medicines, check with a pharmacist that they are safe to take with paroxetine. This is because several medicines which are available from general retail outlets can interfere with the treatment. In particular, do not take the herbal remedy St John's wort, and ask for advice before buying any anti-inflammatory painkillers.
- A few people taking paroxetine find that their skin is more sensitive to sunlight than normal. Until you know how your skin reacts, use a sun cream with a high sun protection factor (SPF) in strong sunlight.
- There are several types of antidepressants and they differ in their possible side-effects. If you find that paroxetine does not suit you then let your doctor know, as another may be found that will.

Can paroxetine cause problems?

Along with their useful effects, most medicines can cause unwanted side-effects although not everyone experiences them. The table below contains some of the most common ones associated with paroxetine. You will find a full list in the manufacturer's information leaflet supplied with your medicine. The unwanted effects often improve as your body adjusts to the new medicine, but speak with your doctor or pharmacist if any of the following continue or become troublesome.

Common paroxetine side-effects	What can I do if I experience this?
Feeling sick (nausea) or being sick (vomiting), diarrhoea or constipation	Stick to simple foods and drink plenty of water
Blurred vision, lack of concentration, feeling dizzy, sleepy or weak	If this happens, do not drive and do not use tools or machines until you feel better
Dry mouth	Try chewing sugar-free gum or sucking sugar-free sweets
Headache	Drink plenty of water and ask your pharmacist to recommend a suitable painkiller. If the headaches continue, let your doctor know
Mood changes such as feeling anxious, nervous, or agitated. Feeling restless or shaky	These usually settle within a few days. If any become troublesome or severe, speak with your doctor
Sweating, yawning, difficulty sleeping, abnormal dreams, increased weight, reduced sexual drive or ability	If any of these become troublesome, speak with your doctor

Important: a few people taking paroxetine have developed an allergic-type reaction. You should contact your doctor straightaway if you develop any swelling around your face, any difficulties breathing, or a severe rash.

On rare occasions, medicines that affect the level of serotonin in the brain can cause it to go too high and cause problems. The risk is higher if you are taking more than one medicine with this effect. Seek medical attention if you develop any combination of the following:

- Stiff muscles or 'jerky' movements.
- Unusually fast heartbeat.
- High temperature (fever), feeling sick (nausea) or being sick (vomiting), diarrhoea.
- Feeling delirious or seeing visions (hallucinating).

If you experience any other symptoms that you think may be due to this medicine, speak with your doctor or pharmacist for further advice.

How to store paroxetine

- Keep all medicines out of the reach and sight of children.
- Store in a cool, dry place, away from direct heat and light.
- Once a bottle of Seroxat® Oral Suspension has been opened it will keep for one month - after this time, make sure you have a fresh supply.

Important information about all medicines

Never take more than the prescribed dose. If you suspect that you or someone else might have taken an overdose of this medicine, go to the accident and emergency department of your local hospital. Take the container with you, even if it is empty.

This medicine is for you. Never give it to other people even if their condition appears to be the same as yours.

If you are having an operation or any dental treatment, tell the person carrying out the treatment which medicines you are taking.

Do not keep out-of-date or unwanted medicines. Take them to your local pharmacy which will dispose of them for you.

If you have any questions about this medicine ask your pharmacist.

If you experience side effects, you can report them online through the [Yellow Card website](#).

Further reading

- [Manufacturer's PIL, Seroxat® 10 mg, 20 mg and 30 mg Tablets](#); GlaxoSmithKline UK, The electronic Medicines Compendium. Dated September 2022.
- [Manufacturer's PIL, Seroxat® 20 mg/10 ml oral suspension](#); GlaxoSmithKline UK, The electronic Medicines Compendium. Dated September 2022.
- [Medicines Complete BNF 88th Edition](#); British Medical Association and Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain, London.

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