BRAND NAME: Cymbalta
Chemical name: duloxetine

General Information: Cymbalta is a unique drug used to treat depression. It has potent effects on the chemical messengers serotonin and norepinephrine in the brain, and weak effects on dopamine. Cymbalta is not habit-forming.

Guidelines for Use: Cymbalta is available in 20, 30, and 60 mg. capsules. The usual starting dose is 20 mg. twice daily. The dosage may be increased at 1-2 week intervals if needed to control symptoms, up to the usual maximum daily dose of 60 mg., taken as 30 mg. twice daily or 60 mg. once daily. It may be taken with food to reduce nausea. Do not chew, crush, or open the capsules. Some people begin to notice improvement in symptoms in 1-2 weeks, but it may take 4-6 weeks before the maximum benefit is reached. If you forget to take the medication but remember within 8 hours or so, go ahead and take it when you remember. If it is close to your next dose, skip the missed dose; do not take double doses. Store the drug in a dry, tightly-closed, light-resistant container out of the reach of children.

Side Effects of Cymbalta:

*Note: Most side effects taper off during treatment as you become used to the drug. Cymbalta does not usually cause weight gain and may cause modest weight loss.

Common side effects (15% or more of users experience; notify your clinician if severe):

--nausea
--sweating
--sedation
--dry mouth
--dizziness
--insomnia
--weakness
--constipation

Less common side effects (less than 15% of users experience; notify if severe):

--low appetite
--urinary hesitancy
--diarrhea
--difficulty reaching orgasm (men only)
--slight increases in blood pressure and/or heart rate
--skin rash: STOP THE DRUG AND CALL YOUR CLINICIAN

*Call your clinician right away if you have worsening depression, thoughts of suicide, or sudden or severe changes in mood or behavior such as feeling anxious, agitated, panicky, irritable, hostile, aggressive, or severely restless, especially at the beginning of treatment or after a change in dosage of your medication.*

Any antidepressant, including Cymbalta, may trigger mania or hypomania in vulnerable individuals, usually but not always those with bipolar disorder. Symptoms include increased energy and hyperactivity, decreased need for sleep, marked euphoria or irritability, impulsiveness and increased pleasure-seeking. CALL YOUR CLINICIAN AS SOON AS POSSIBLE IF YOU DEVELOP THESE SYMPTOMS.
**Precautions:** Do not take this drug if you have ever had an allergic reaction to Cymbalta. Inform yourclinician if you have any known drug allergies; if you have epilepsy, kidney disease, liver disease, high blood pressure, or glaucoma; if you are taking any other drug (prescribed or not), vitamin, supplement or herb; if you are a heavy alcohol user; if you will be undergoing anesthesia or surgery while taking this drug.

**Inform your clinician if you are or might be pregnant.** Cymbalta has been shown to have adverse effects on fetal development in animals and is not recommended for pregnant women or nursing mothers. It has not been tested in children and is not recommended for use by infants or children. Metabolism of the drug may be slowed in the elderly, so lower doses may be needed.

**This drug may cause drowsiness.** If so, avoid driving or operating machinery until you are sure that your alertness and coordination are not affected.

Cymbalta may cause discontinuation symptoms (headache, nausea, vomiting, dizziness, tingling, irritability, nightmares) in some people if it is stopped abruptly. It should be tapered down gradually under the supervision of your clinician.

Overdoses of Cymbalta alone have not proved fatal to date, but there have been few reported cases. However, immediate emergency medical care should be sought in all cases of overdose.

**Interactions:**

**Alcohol:** Cymbalta does not appear to enhance the effects of alcohol and light social drinking is acceptable while taking it for most people. However, in combination with heavy drinking, the drug can cause stress to the liver. Alcohol use may also contribute to mood problems, so is not recommended for those suffering from depression.

**Food:** Avoid grapefruit juice; it interferes with a liver enzyme that metabolizes Cymbalta.

**Other drugs:** A TOXIC REACTION COULD OCCUR IF CYMBALTA IS TAKEN WITH MAO INHIBITORS (NARDIL, PARNATE); THESE DRUGS MUST BE STOPPED AT LEAST 2 WEEKS BEFORE CYMBALTA IS STARTED AND VICE VERSA. Care should be taken when this drug is used in combination with any of the following drugs: some antipsychotics (Stelazine or generic trifluoperazine, Haldol or generic haloperidol, Mellaril or generic thioridazine); some antidepressants (Prozac or generic fluoxetine, Paxil or generic paroxetine, Luvox or generic fluvoxamine, Zoloft, nefazodone, Celexa, amitriptyline, clomipramine, desipramine, Wellbutrin or generic bupropion); quinidine; Tagamet or generic cimetidine; Celebrex; antibiotics such as ciprofloxacin and enoxacin. Other drugs may also be problematic; discuss with your clinician. DO NOT USE THIS DRUG IN COMBINATION WITH ST. JOHN’S WORT.