FLUVOXAMINE

**General Information:** Fluvoxamine is a serotonin-specific drug used to treat obsessive-compulsive disorder, depression, and other psychological conditions. Fluvoxamine is not habit-forming.

**Guidelines for Use:** Fluvoxamine is available in 25, 50 and 100 mg. tablets; the 50 and 100 mg. tablets can be broken in half to get the correct dosage. The usual starting dose is 25-50 mg. per day, taken at bedtime or whenever your clinician directs. The dosage may be increased at 4-7 day intervals if needed until a good response is achieved. It may be taken with food to reduce nausea. 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 Fluvoxamine:**

*Note: Most side effects taper off during treatment as you become used to the drug.

**Common side effects** (10% or more of users experience; notify your clinician if severe):

--nausea --sedation --insomnia

**Less common side effects** (less than 10% of users experience; notify if severe):

--diarrhea --low appetite --nervousness, tremor
--weakness --sweating --dry mouth
--dizziness --vivid dreaming
--sexual changes: May not go away; discuss with your clinician.
--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 fluvoxamine, may cause activation into a state of mania or mild mania (“hypomania”) in vulnerable individuals, usually but not always those who have bipolar disorder. Such a state is characterized by increased energy and hyperactivity, decreased need for sleep, marked euphoria or irritability, impulsiveness and an increase in 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 fluvoxamine. Inform your clinician if you have any known drug allergies; if you have epilepsy, kidney or liver disease; if you are taking any other drug (prescribed or not), vitamin, supplement or herb; if you will be undergoing anesthesia or surgery while taking this drug. **Inform your clinician if you are or might be pregnant.** Exposure to this drug in the uterus is unlikely to increase risk of fetal malformations, but some newborns exposed to this type of drug after 20 weeks of gestation suffer from respiratory and other difficulties that range from mild to severe. You and your clinician will need to weigh the benefits of treatment against the risks to mother and baby. Fluvoxamine 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 often causes drowsiness,** especially early in treatment. If so, avoid driving or operating machinery until you are sure your alertness and coordination are not affected.

Fluvoxamine may cause discontinuation symptoms (headache, nausea, dizziness, vertigo, muscle aches) in some people if it is stopped abruptly, particularly after long-term use. It should be tapered down gradually under the supervision of your clinician.

Overdoses of fluvoxamine alone are rarely fatal. However, immediate emergency medical care should be sought in cases of overdose. Symptoms of overdose include drowsiness, vomiting, diarrhea, and dizziness.

**Interactions:**

**Alcohol:** Although the manufacturers of fluvoxamine do not recommend the use of alcohol when on this drug, it appears that light social drinking is acceptable. Be aware that the effects of alcohol may be enhanced. Alcohol use may contribute to depression and anxiety, so is not recommended for people experiencing these problems.

**Food:** Avoid grapefruit juice, as it interferes with a liver enzyme that is needed to metabolize fluvoxamine. Excessive caffeine may increase side effects of the drug.

**Other drugs:** A POTENTIALLY TOXIC REACTION COULD OCCUR IF FLUVOXAMINE IS TAKEN WITH MAO INHIBITORS (NARDIL, PARNATE); THESE DRUGS MUST BE STOPPED AT LEAST 2 WEEKS BEFORE FLUVOXAMINE IS STARTED AND VICE VERSA. Care should be taken when this drug is used in combination with any of the following drugs: warfarin (Coumadin), theophylline (Quibron, Slo-Phyllin, Theolair, others), phenytoin (Dilantin), tolbutamide, carbamazepine (Tegretol), alprazolam (Xanax), triazolam (Halcion), diazepam (Valium), zolpidem (Ambien), beta blockers such as propranolol (Inderal) and metoprolol (Lopressor), diltiazem (Cardizem), verapamil (Calan, Isoptin), nifedipine (Adalat, Procardia), tricyclic antidepressants (Elavil, Tofranil), other modern antidepressants (Zoloft, Effexor, Serzone, Celexa, Remeron), antipsychotic drugs (Haldol, Clozaril, Zyprexa, others), and hormones (estrogen, progesterone, birth control pills). Other drugs may also be problematic; discuss with your clinician. DO NOT USE THIS DRUG IN COMBINATION WITH ST. JOHN’S WORT.