

Deutetrabenazine

Austedo, Austedo XR, a medicine that quiets unwanted movements

Deutetrabenazine calms the unwanted movements of the face, mouth, and body that can come with TD or Huntington's disease.

WHAT IT TREATS

Tardive dyskinesia, chorea

HOW YOU TAKE IT

Twice a day with food

WHEN IT WORKS

Some by 2 weeks, more by 12

HABIT FORMING

No

⚠️ IMPORTANT SAFETY WARNING

This medicine can cause or worsen depression and thoughts of suicide in people with Huntington's disease. It is not used if your depression is untreated or you are having such thoughts. If you are, call or text **988** now.

① WHAT THIS MEDICINE DOES

- It treats TD, a problem where your face, mouth, tongue, or hands make repeated movements you never asked them to make.
- TD can appear after months or years on certain mental health medicines. It is a side effect, not a personal failing.
- Deutetrabenazine** lowers the brain signal that drives those movements. It does not treat your mood or thinking symptoms.
- It is also used for the twisting, dance-like movements of Huntington's disease, which doctors call chorea.

② HOW TO TAKE IT

- Take the regular tablets twice a day with food. Food matters here, because it helps your body absorb a steady amount.
- Swallow tablets whole. Do not chew, crush, or break them, since that releases the whole dose at once and can hit you hard.
- The once-daily XR form is swallowed whole too. Ask your pharmacist which form you have if the bottle is confusing.
- If you miss a dose, skip it and take the next one at its normal time. Never double up to catch up on a missed one.
- Store the bottle at room temperature and keep the cap tight. Heat and steam from a shower can break the tablets down.

📈 WHAT TO EXPECT

- Movements settle slowly. Many people see some change in **2 to 4 weeks**, with the fuller effect closer to **12 weeks**.
- Your prescriber builds the amount up in small steps. That slow start is on purpose and it lowers side effects.
- Other people often notice the improvement first. A short phone video every few weeks makes progress easier to see.
- Working means less strain when you eat, talk, and go out. It does not mean every movement disappears completely.

♥️ COMMON SIDE EFFECTS

- Sleepiness and tiredness are the most common effects, especially early. Tell your prescriber if it is wearing on your day.
- Feeling unsteady or off balance can happen. Take stairs slowly and hold the rail until you know how it affects you.
- Loose stools, dry mouth, or a stuffy nose can show up. Sip water through the day and use saline spray for the stuffiness.
- Some people feel restless or notice their mood dipping. That is worth a call, not a wait-and-see, so speak up early.
- Headache and trouble sleeping happen for some. A steady bedtime and daylight in the morning both help more than they sound.
- New stiffness or slowness can show up over time. Your prescriber can adjust things, so mention it at your next visit.

⚠️ CALL YOUR PRESCRIBER OR GET HELP RIGHT AWAY IF

- New or worse depression, or thoughts of hurting yourself: call your prescriber today. If you might act, call or text **988**.
- Fainting, or a heartbeat that is very fast, very slow, or fluttering: call **911** or go to the emergency room.
- High fever with stiff muscles, confusion, and sweating all at once is an emergency. Call **911**.
- Trouble swallowing, or new trouble walking and holding yourself steady: call your prescriber the same day.

🚫 WHAT TO AVOID

- Do not drive or use machines until you know how **deutetrabenazine** affects you. Sleepiness is common in the first weeks.
- Alcohol adds to the sleepiness and unsteady feeling, and can deepen low mood. Talk with your prescriber before you drink.
- Do not take this with an MAOI antidepressant, or with reserpine or tetrabenazine. Your prescriber checks that for you.
- Share your full medicine list, including over-the-counter items. Some antidepressants change how much of this you get.
- If you are pregnant, nursing, or planning a pregnancy, tell your prescriber so you can weigh choices together.

① STOPPING IT SAFELY

- Do not stop on your own. Your movements will usually return over a few weeks once the medicine clears your body.
- If you have been off it for more than a week, your prescriber restarts low and builds back up rather than jumping in.
- If side effects or cost are pushing you toward quitting, say so. There are assistance programs and other medicines to try.

❓ QUESTIONS TO ASK

- How will we track whether my movements are truly getting better?
- What mood changes should make me call you right away?
- Should I take this with a snack or with a full meal?
- How long before we decide whether this one is working for me?

Where this information comes from

MedlinePlus. (2023). *Deutetrabenazine*. U.S. National Library of Medicine. <https://medlineplus.gov/druginfo/meds/a617022.html>

National Alliance on Mental Illness. (2023). *Mental health medications*. <https://www.nami.org/treatments-and-approaches/mental-health-medications/>

National Institute of Mental Health. (2024). *Mental health medications*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/mental-health-medications>

National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke. (2024). *Tardive dyskinesia*. National Institutes of Health. <https://www.ninds.nih.gov/health-information/disorders/tardive-dyskinesia>

U.S. Food and Drug Administration. (n.d.). *Drugs@FDA: FDA-approved drugs*. <https://www.accessdata.fda.gov/scripts/cder/daf/index.cfm>

U.S. National Library of Medicine. (2024). *DailyMed*. <https://dailymed.nlm.nih.gov/dailymed/>

NOTE

Sources are listed in APA 7th edition style. This handout is general information about a medicine, not medical advice, and it does not replace the instructions from your own prescriber or pharmacist. Never start, change, or stop a medicine on your own. If you think you are having a serious reaction, call your prescriber; if you cannot breathe, cannot stay awake, or are thinking of harming yourself, call 911 or 988 right away.