

Fluvoxamine

Luvox, Luvox CR (brands discontinued; generics available), an antidepressant called an SSRI

Fluvoxamine loosens the grip of obsessive thoughts and rituals so they take up less of your day.

WHAT IT TREATS

OCD, social anxiety

HOW YOU TAKE IT

At bedtime, any food

WHEN IT WORKS

2-4 weeks; fuller by 10-12

HABIT FORMING

No

⚠️ IMPORTANT SAFETY WARNING

Antidepressants can raise the risk of suicidal thoughts in people under **25**, mostly in the first weeks or after a dose change. Tell someone right away and call your prescriber. Do not stop the medicine on your own.

🕒 WHAT THIS MEDICINE DOES

- **Fluvoxamine** is an antidepressant. It helps your brain hold on to serotonin, a chemical that steadies mood and worry.
- In the US it is approved for obsessive-compulsive disorder from age 8, and the long-acting capsule also treats social anxiety.
- It does not erase intrusive thoughts. It makes them quieter and easier to ignore, which is what lets therapy do its work.
- It is not habit forming. It works by staying in your system every day, not by calming you down in the moment.

🕒 HOW TO TAKE IT

- Take it at bedtime. It tends to make people sleepy, and using that on purpose turns a side effect into a benefit.
- If your prescriber splits it into two doses, take the bigger one at night and the smaller one earlier in the day.
- You can take it with or without food, but taking it with a snack cuts the nausea a lot in the first two weeks.
- Swallow the long-acting capsules whole. Do not open, crush, or chew them, or the whole day's dose hits at once.
- If you miss a dose, take it when you remember that day. If it is nearly time for the next, skip it. Never double up.

📈 WHAT TO EXPECT

- This one is raised in small steps on purpose. The slow climb is what keeps nausea and grogginess manageable.
- Give obsessive-compulsive symptoms **10 to 12 weeks** at a full dose before judging. Anxiety usually eases sooner.
- Side effects often arrive before the benefit does. That gap is the single most common reason people quit too early.
- Working looks like shorter rituals and thoughts that pass instead of sticking. Progress is gradual, not a switch flipping.

💡 COMMON SIDE EFFECTS

- Nausea is the most common early effect and the top reason people stop. Food, small meals, and time nearly always fix it.
- Daytime sleepiness is common. Keep the main dose at bedtime and be careful driving until you know how you react.
- Trouble sleeping, headache, and dry mouth also happen early. Water, a set bedtime, and less caffeine all help.
- Sexual side effects are common: less desire, delayed orgasm, or less sensation. Say so, because there are real fixes.
- Appetite may drop and a little weight may come off early on. It usually settles once your dose stays steady.
- Feeling washed out or low on energy can happen at first. Tell your prescriber if it lasts past the first month.

⚠️ CALL YOUR PRESCRIBER OR GET HELP RIGHT AWAY IF

- New or worse thoughts of suicide, especially early or after a dose change: call or text **988** now and tell someone today.
- Call **911** for agitation with fever, stiff muscles, a racing heart, or twitching. That can mean too much serotonin.
- Call your prescriber for new confusion, bad headache, or unsteadiness, especially in an older adult. Salt levels are fixable.
- Call your prescriber if you feel wired and sleepless for days, or if you bruise and bleed more easily than usual.

🚫 WHAT TO AVOID

- **Fluvoxamine** interacts with more medicines than most. Give your pharmacist your full list, including anything over the counter.
- Tell your prescriber if you take clozapine, theophylline, tizanidine, or a sleep aid. These need checking before you start.
- Cut back on caffeine. This medicine slows how you clear it, so the same coffee can leave you jittery and awake.
- Skip alcohol. It stacks onto the drowsiness and works against what the medicine is trying to do for your mood.
- Tell your prescriber if you start or stop smoking. It changes how much medicine stays in your body.

🛑 STOPPING IT SAFELY

- Never stop on your own, even when the thoughts quiet down. That quiet is the medicine working, not a sign you are done.
- This medicine leaves the body quickly, so missing doses can bring dizziness, irritability, and electric-shock feelings.
- Your prescriber will lower the dose in small steps over several weeks. That plan is made together, never on your own.
- Most people stay on it a year or longer after they improve. Stopping early is the top reason symptoms come back.

❓ QUESTIONS TO ASK

- How long should we give this before deciding it is not the right one?
- Do any of my other medicines or supplements clash with this one?
- What can we try if the sexual side effects do not go away on their own?
- Who do I call after hours if I start feeling worse instead of better?

Where this information comes from

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline. (2025). *Talk to someone now*. <https://988lifeline.org/>

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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.