

Levomilnacipran

Fetzima, an antidepressant called an SNRI

Levomilnacipran targets depression that shows up mostly as fatigue, flatness, and trouble focusing.

WHAT IT TREATS

Depression in adults

HOW YOU TAKE IT

Once daily, any food

WHEN IT WORKS

1-2 weeks; fuller by 6-8

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

- Levomilnacipran is an antidepressant. It raises serotonin and norepinephrine, two chemicals that steady mood and drive.
- Of the medicines in its family, this one leans hardest on the energy and focus side rather than the calming side.
- It is approved for depression in adults only. It is not approved for anxiety, for pain, or for anyone under 18.
- It is not habit forming, but your body does adjust to it, so it must be stopped slowly with your prescriber's help.

🕒 HOW TO TAKE IT

- Take it once a day at about the same time. You can take it with or without food, so choose a time you will keep.
- Swallow the capsule whole. Do not open, crush, or chew it, or the whole day's dose is released in one go.
- Your prescriber starts you low for the first couple of days, then steps up. Follow that schedule exactly as written.
- If you miss a dose, take it when you remember that day. If it is nearly time for the next one, skip it. Never double up.
- Store it at room temperature and refill early, since this medicine leaves your body fast if you run out.

📈 WHAT TO EXPECT

- Energy and focus often shift first, in about **1 to 2 weeks**. Mood and interest usually take a few weeks longer.
- Give it **4 to 6 weeks** at a full dose before you judge it. The fullest benefit can take 8 to 12 weeks.
- Side effects often arrive before the benefit does. That gap is the single most common reason people quit too early.
- Expect your pulse and blood pressure to be checked as your dose rises. Both can drift up, and both are easy to track.

💡 COMMON SIDE EFFECTS

- Nausea is common early on. Taking it with food and eating smaller, plainer meals usually settles it within two weeks.
- A faster heartbeat or a fluttering feeling is common with this one. Mention it, since your dose may need adjusting.
- Constipation and lower appetite happen often. Water, fiber, fruit, and daily movement handle most of it.
- Trouble starting to urinate is more likely with **levomilnacipran** than similar medicines. Tell your prescriber right away.
- Sexual side effects are common: erection trouble, delayed orgasm, or less desire. Say so, because there are real fixes.
- Sweating more than usual is common. Layers, cool drinks, and cotton clothing are the practical answer.

⚠️ 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 **911** if you cannot urinate at all, or for sudden eye pain with blurred vision and halos around lights.
- Call your prescriber for blood pressure readings that keep climbing, or for new confusion in an older adult.

🚫 WHAT TO AVOID

- Skip alcohol. It works against the medicine, adds to dizziness, and makes both sleep and low mood harder to fix.
- Ask before any new medicine, herb, or supplement. St. John's wort, tramadol, and migraine triptans are the big ones.
- Tell your prescriber about stimulants or decongestants. Together they can push your pulse and blood pressure up.
- Mention antibiotics like clarithromycin or antifungal pills. They raise your levels and may need your dose lowered.
- Tell your prescriber if you are pregnant, nursing, or planning to be. There is little safety data on this newer medicine.

🛑 STOPPING IT SAFELY

- Never stop on your own, even when you feel great. Feeling well is the medicine working, not proof you are finished with it.
- Stopping fast can bring dizziness, electric-shock feelings, nausea, headache, and irritability within a day or two.
- Your prescriber will lower the dose in steps over weeks. That plan is made together, never decided on your own.
- Most people stay on it at least **6 to 12 months** after they feel well. Stopping early is the top reason symptoms return.

❓ QUESTIONS TO ASK

- How often should my pulse and blood pressure be checked on this?
- Do my kidney results change what dose is safe for me?
- 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.