

Vilazodone

Viibryd, an antidepressant that works on serotonin two ways

Vilazodone treats depression, and it often helps the anxious, wound-up part of it at the same time.

WHAT IT TREATS

Depression in adults

HOW YOU TAKE IT

Once daily, **WITH 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

- **Vilazodone** is an antidepressant. It raises serotonin, a chemical that steadies mood, and also switches on one serotonin receptor.
- That second action is meant to take the edge off anxiety, so it is often chosen when depression comes with a lot of worry.
- It is approved for depression in adults. It has not been shown to work in teenagers, so it is not used in that age group.
- It is not habit forming and it will not sedate you. It works by building up steadily in your system day by day.

🕒 HOW TO TAKE IT

- Always take it **with food**, and a real meal, not a cracker. On an empty stomach your body absorbs only about half of it.
- Take it once a day at the same time, with the same meal each day, so the amount in your system stays even.
- Your prescriber will start low and raise the dose in steps. Those steps exist to keep nausea and diarrhea from hitting hard.
- If you miss a dose, take it with your next meal that same day. If it is nearly the next day, skip it. Never double up.
- The starter pack is arranged in order for a reason. Follow it exactly and do not jump ahead to a higher dose.

📈 WHAT TO EXPECT

- Sleep, appetite, and energy usually move first, in about **1 to 2 weeks**. Mood and interest tend to follow later.
- 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.
- If you took it without food and felt nothing, that may be why. Tell your prescriber before writing the medicine off.

💔 COMMON SIDE EFFECTS

- Diarrhea is the most common effect and hits about **1 in 4** people. Taking it with a full meal is the best defense.
- Nausea and sometimes vomiting are common early. Bland food, smaller meals, and slow dose increases all help.
- Trouble sleeping can happen. Try taking it with an earlier meal, and ask your prescriber before changing anything.
- Dizziness and dry mouth are common. Stand up slowly, sip water, and use sugar-free gum or lozenges.
- Vivid or strange dreams show up for some people. They usually fade, but mention them if they disturb your sleep.
- Sexual side effects can still happen even though rates looked low in studies. Say so, because there are real fixes.

⚠️ 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 diarrhea will not stop, or if you feel wired and sleepless for days on end.

🚫 WHAT TO AVOID

- Skip alcohol, especially while your dose is going up. It works against the medicine and can worsen the stomach upset.
- Ask before any new medicine, herb, or supplement. St. John's wort makes **vilazodone** much weaker and can waste months.
- Tell your prescriber about antibiotics like clarithromycin or antifungals. They raise your levels and may need a dose change.
- Check before regular ibuprofen, naproxen, or aspirin. Together they raise your chance of stomach bleeding.
- Tell your prescriber if you are pregnant, nursing, or planning to be. There is less safety data on this one than on older options.

⏸️ 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 suddenly can bring dizziness, irritability, headache, and broken sleep. Coming down in steps prevents most of it.
- Your prescriber will lower the dose gradually 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

- What counts as enough food to take this with each day?
- How long should I give this before we decide whether it is working?
- What can we try if the diarrhea or nausea does not settle down?
- 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.