

VENLAFAXINE

SNRI antidepressant

Availability ¹	Brand name	Quick guide
Modified-release capsule 37.5 mg, 75 mg, 150 mg	Efexor-XR, Elaxine SR, Enlafax XR Generics are available	
Effect of food	Food does not significantly affect absorption. Give after food to minimise gastrointestinal side effects. ¹	
Discontinuation	Discontinuation (withdrawal) symptoms are common, do not stop treatment suddenly. ^{1,2} Consult a pharmacist or a medicines information service for information about tapering and switching antidepressants. Seek specialist advice if a direct switch is required.	
Other	Efexor XR pellets may appear in the stool, this is not an indication of malabsorption. ¹ May cause dry mouth and an impaired or altered sense of taste. ¹	

What to do for people with enteral feeding tubes

Option 1	Do not crush the capsule or the contents of the capsule. ¹ Some pharmacies can make a solution from the contents of the Efexor-XR capsule. ³ A dose change is required as the solution is an immediate-release formulation. Contact a pharmacist or a compounding pharmacy.
Option 2	Warning – tube blockage, requiring replacement has been reported with this method. For Efexor-XR brand only and size 14 French tubes and larger. ⁴ Open the modified-release capsule and disperse the contents (pellets) in water in an enteral syringe. Use at least 30 mL of water for each Efexor-XR capsule. Give one capsule at a time. The pellets may stick to the tube, flush with at least another 60–90 mL of water to avoid tube blockage. For other brands: the capsules contain larger pellets or mini-tablets and are not suitable for administration by enteral feeding tube.
Option 3	For tubes that are smaller than size 14 French, contact the prescriber to consider other options.

What to do for people with swallowing difficulties

Option 1	Do not crush the capsule or the contents of the capsule. ¹ For Efexor-XR brand only: ⁵ Open the capsule and mix the pellets with a spoonful of apple puree. See Method F for instructions. The pellets must be swallowed without chewing. ¹ Other brand contain larger pellets or mini-tablets and are not suitable for people with swallowing difficulties.
Option 2	Some pharmacies can make a solution from the contents of the Efexor-XR capsule. ³ A dose change is required as the solution is an immediate-release formulation. Contact a pharmacist or a compounding pharmacy.

REFERENCES:

1. Product information. Available from www.tga.gov.au. Accessed 18/07/2023.
2. Stopping an antidepressant [March 2021]. In: Therapeutic Guidelines [Internet]. Melbourne: Therapeutic Guidelines Ltd; June 2023.
3. De Rosa NF, Sharley NA. Stability of venlafaxine hydrochloride liquid formulations suitable for administration via enteral feeding tubes. J Pharm Prac Res 2008; 38: 212–5.
4. Dam F. Efexor XR - administration to patients with swallowing difficulty. [email]. West Ryde, NSW: Pfizer Australia; 03/10/2014.
5. Wong YY. Altven/Efexor - Opening the capsule for ease of administration [email]. West Ryde, NSW: Pfizer Australia; 30/08/2016.