



Tramadol

Information for patients and carers



This document was written by the **All Wales Therapeutics and Toxicology Centre** and the **All Wales Medicines Strategy Group**. It is an easy read version of 'Tramadol - Information for patients and carers'.



How to use this document



This is an easy read document. But you may still need support to read it. Ask someone you know to help you.



Medicine is often prescribed by a doctor, but other healthcare workers like some nurses and pharmacists can also do this. Where this document says doctor, this includes other healthcare workers who prescribe medicine.



For more information contact the **All Wales Therapeutics and Toxicology Centre:**

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What is tramadol?



Tramadol is medicine that helps reduce pain.



A doctor might have prescribed tramadol for you if you have a lot of pain. Or if other pain medicine has not worked.



Usually, you should only take tramadol for a short time.



Only take tramadol that has been prescribed for you.

Starting tramadol

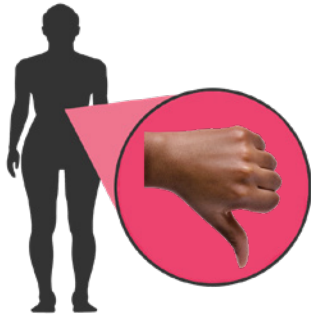


A doctor will want to see how you get on with tramadol.



They might prescribe it for 2 to 4 weeks. They will only give you more after that if it helps reduce your pain.

Side effects of taking tramadol



Side effects are when medicine has unwanted effects on your body.

There are some common side effects from taking tramadol. They are:



- feeling dizzy
- feeling sleepy



- headache
- problems going to poo



- dry mouth
- feeling sick or being sick



- sweating

If you feel dizzy it might not be safe for you to:



- use machinery



- use electric tools



- drive a car or other vehicle. It is against the law to drive if you feel dizzy.

Stopping tramadol



Pain medicine does not work for everyone.



If tramadol does not work for you, the doctor will take you off it slowly.



This is to help stop side effects.



If you have been taking tramadol for more than 3 months, you should talk to your doctor. They will check if it is helping you.



If you are thinking of stopping tramadol you should talk to your doctor first. They will look at how you are feeling and slowly reduce the tramadol.

Side effects of stopping tramadol

Stopping tramadol quickly can cause withdrawal side effects, like:



- signs of flu



- anxiety



- sleep problems



- nightmares



- bad mood

Taking too much tramadol



Taking more tramadol than prescribed can cause severe harm.



If you have taken more than you should phone 111 for help. If it is an emergency phone 999.



Do not share your tramadol with anyone.

Taking tramadol for a long time

Tramadol can cause problems if you take it for a long time. For example:



- It might not work as well as it did before.



- Withdrawal – side effects of stopping tramadol. Especially if you suddenly stop.



- Addiction – this means you feel that you need to keep taking it.

Taking other medicine with tramadol



Some medicine can affect the way tramadol works and increase side effects.



Drinking alcohol when taking tramadol can make you drowsy.



Take extra care and speak to your doctor or chemist if:



- You take medicine:
 - to help you sleep
 - for depression
 - for anxiety
 - for epilepsy. This is a brain condition that makes a person have seizures.



- You take medicine called warfarin.



- You take other pain medicine.



- You drink alcohol or take street drugs.



- You have kidney problems.



If you are pregnant or breastfeeding, you might not be able to take tramadol. Talk to your doctor or chemist.

Tramadol might not be good for:



- Children.



- Older people.



- People with some medical conditions.



- People taking some types of medicine.

Other things you can do to help your pain



- Stay active.



- Do things you enjoy.



- Set small goals.

- Talk to your doctor about trying a different medicine.



- Try another treatment. For example, physiotherapy.



- Ask to see a doctor or healthcare worker who deals with pain.



If you have any questions, ask your doctor or chemist.

Where to find more information

Organisations that help people living with pain:

Action on Pain

www.action-on-pain.co.uk

Welsh Pain Society

www.welshpainsociety.org.uk

British Pain Society

www.britishpainsociety.org

Pain Concern

www.painconcern.org.uk

The Pain Toolkit

www.paintoolkit.org

My Live Well With Pain

my.livewellwithpain.co.uk

NHS Chronic Pain A–Z health

www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/ways-to-manage-chronic-pain