

Cariprazine

Vraylar

A daily medicine for certain mood and thinking symptoms. It stays in the body a long time, so changes need time and follow-up.

From Jeffrey Panko, PMHNP-BC's education collection ·

Draft for review · Clinical content has not been revalidated for this website.

ONCE DAILY

WITH OR WITHOUT FOOD

Use your own prescribed dose. Different conditions and ages need different schedules.

What it is used for

Treats schizophrenia from age 13 and bipolar I mania or mixed episodes from age 10. The starting schedule is different for children.

In adults, treats bipolar I depression or is added to an antidepressant for major depression. These uses have a lower maximum dose than mania or schizophrenia.

How it works

It changes signals at dopamine and serotonin receptors, helping some people with mood, thinking or perception.

The receptor diagram is a map of drug actions, not proof that it will improve motivation or thinking for everyone. Track your own goals and response.

What to expect over time

EARLY DAYS

Nausea, sleep changes or restlessness may appear before benefit.

OVER SEVERAL WEEKS

Benefits can develop gradually. Keep follow-up visits even if the first days feel fine.

AFTER DOSE CHANGES

Side effects can arrive late and take weeks to settle. There is no fixed two-week settling point.

Taking your medication

Take once daily, with or without food. Follow the written schedule; do not speed up increases because benefit feels slow.

For a missed dose, take it when remembered unless the next dose is near. Skip then; never double. Ask about restarting after several missed days.

Do not stop or change the dose yourself. Long-lasting drug levels are not protection against symptoms returning. Keep an added antidepressant as prescribed.

When to get help

Emergency: fever with stiff muscles/confusion, trouble breathing, face swelling, seizure, or stroke symptoms. Call 911.

Suicidal thoughts or unsafe impulses: get help now. In the US, call/text 988; call 911 for immediate danger.

Call promptly: severe restlessness, new uncontrollable movements, fever/infection, marked thirst and frequent urination, or trouble swallowing.

Early side effects

Restlessness, nausea, dizziness, sleepiness, insomnia or stiffness can occur. An inner need to move or constant pacing may be akathisia, not simply anxiety. Tell your prescriber.

Other effects to discuss

Weight, blood sugar and cholesterol can rise even if this medicine causes less average weight gain than some others. Movement problems can persist. Monitoring still matters.

What to keep track of

Keep weight, blood-pressure, movement and lab checks. Track sleep, mood, daily function and side effects for several weeks after each change. Do not wait out severe symptoms.

Before you start

Discuss low blood pressure, falls, seizures, diabetes, heart/stroke history, low white cells, kidney/liver problems, pregnancy and breastfeeding. It is not approved for dementia-related psychosis; antipsychotics increase death and stroke risks in older adults with that condition.

Medicines & interactions

Antibiotics & antifungals

Some need major dose adjustments. Check each new prescription before starting it; do not simply halve your dose.

Seizure drugs & herbs

Carbamazepine, rifampin and St. John's wort can disrupt drug levels. Some combinations are not recommended.

Grapefruit & supplements

Check grapefruit, nonprescription products and supplements with your pharmacist. Keep an up-to-date medicine list.

Alcohol & sedatives

Avoid alcohol. Sedatives can worsen drowsiness; blood-pressure medicines may add dizziness or falls.

Everyday tips

Rise slowly. Avoid driving until you know how alert and steady you feel.

Stay hydrated and avoid overheating. Follow any prescribed fluid restrictions.

Keep regular meals and manageable movement. Report appetite or weight changes early.

Use a simple daily dose reminder. Bring notes about delayed side effects to follow-up.

Your questions, answered

Does more mean better?

Not necessarily. Higher doses can add restlessness without more benefit. Depression dosing is lower; follow your own plan.

What if I feel unusually restless?

Contact your prescriber. The dose or treatment may need review; relief may be slow because the drug leaves gradually.

Pregnant or breastfeeding?

Plan with your prescriber. Newborn effects are possible. A small study found drug in milk and reports of infant sleepiness; safety is not established.

Can I take it only when needed?

No. It is prescribed as a daily medicine, not a quick extra dose for distress or sleeplessness.

Storage & safety

Store at room temperature, away from children. Never share it. For an extra dose or suspected overdose, call US Poison Control: 1-800-222-1222; call 911 for severe symptoms.

About this information

For general information only; not a substitute for individualized medical advice. This sheet does not cover every risk or interaction. Ask your prescriber or pharmacist before changing how you take this medication.

Sources

1. <https://dailymed.nlm.nih.gov/dailymed/lookup.cfm?setid=4b5f7c65-aa2d-452a-b3db-bc85c06ff12f>
 2. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/42085651/>
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Educational inclusion does not mean this medication or its indications are treated at this practice. Review the guide for your exact product with your prescriber or pharmacist.

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