

Dothiepin

Dosulepin • Prothiaden / Thaden

An international tricyclic antidepressant. Careful prescribing and secure storage matter: overdose can be fatal.

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

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

DO NOT STOP SUDDENLY

ANY SUSPECTED OVERDOSE: GET HELP NOW

International reference using UK guidance. Product names and instructions vary by country; not for children.

What it is used for

UK treatment for depression, especially with anxiety, after other options fail or are not tolerated. A specialist should start new treatment.

Sleep or pain use is off-label; it is not a routine sleeping pill. No US approval was identified in the reviewed sources.

How it works

Slows serotonin and norepinephrine reuptake, changing nerve-cell communication. Its full therapeutic mechanism is uncertain.

Other actions can cause sleepiness, dry mouth or dizziness. Heart-conduction effects are a risk, especially in overdose, not a benefit.

What to expect over time

FIRST DAYS

Sleepiness, dry mouth or dizziness may appear before benefit. Avoid alcohol and do not drive until you know its effects.

OVER WEEKS

Mood may begin improving after 2–4 weeks. Keep early follow-ups and report worsening mood or suicidal thoughts immediately.

AT REVIEW

Judge mood, anxiety and function, not just sleep. Review benefits, side effects and safer alternatives before any dose increase.

Taking your medication

Follow the exact strength and schedule on your prescription. Doses may be divided or taken at night. Do not switch schedules or increase the dose yourself.

Swallow tablets or capsules whole with water. Do not chew. For the reviewed UK product, skip a missed dose and take the next on time; never double.

Rise slowly and use care on stairs. Report falls or persistent daytime sleepiness. Ask before adding any medicine, including sleep or cold remedies.

When to get help

Emergency: overdose, any child ingestion, seizure, collapse, breathing trouble or immediate self-harm danger. Get help now; do not wait for symptoms.

Urgent care: fainting, irregular heartbeat, eye pain, inability to urinate, severe constipation with pain/vomiting, or fever with confusion and stiffness.

Call promptly: worsening mood, suicidal thoughts, unusual high energy, confusion, yellow skin/eyes, unexplained fever, bruising or breathlessness.

Early side effects

Dry mouth, constipation, blurred vision, sweating and dizziness can occur. Dental care, sugar-free gum and an agreed bowel plan may help.

Other effects to discuss

Weight, appetite, sexual function or alertness may change. Report persistent effects, falls, breast changes or unexpected milk production.

What to keep track of

Review pulse, blood pressure sitting and standing, weight, mood, falls, bowel and bladder function. ECG or blood tests depend on age, risks and symptoms. Glucose may change with diabetes; new confusion or weakness may need a sodium check.

Before you start

Discuss heart disease or fainting, liver/kidney problems, seizures, bipolar disorder, glaucoma, trouble urinating, constipation, thyroid disease, diabetes, porphyria, adrenal tumors and pregnancy/feeding plans. Recent heart attack, heart block/arrhythmia, mania, severe liver disease or allergy can rule out treatment. Check excipients if you have allergies or sugar intolerance; older adults may need much lower doses or an alternative.

Medicines & interactions

MAOIs and antidepressants

Do not combine with an MAOI or start within 14 days after stopping one. Switching the other way needs the new medicine's required gap. UK guidance also avoids concurrent SSRIs; fluoxetine can interact after stopping.

Heart rhythm and blood pressure

Review rhythm medicines, QT-prolonging drugs, clonidine, water tablets, stimulants and decongestants. Tell your dentist, surgeon and anesthesia team that you take dosulepin.

Sedating or drying medicines

Alcohol, opioids, sleeping pills and sedating antihistamines increase impairment. Bladder medicines and other anticholinergic drugs can worsen constipation, urinary trouble and confusion.

Other medicines and supplements

Check tramadol and other serotonin medicines, seizure medicines, cimetidine, antibiotics, ritonavir, blood thinners and contraceptives. Starting or stopping medicines can change drug levels or risks.

Everyday tips

Use a consistent schedule and refill early. Ask about any change in strength, brand or instructions.

Track mood, sleep and function. Therapy and practical support can complement treatment.

Keep only the agreed supply; smaller amounts reduce access but do not make overdose safe. Never share.

Ask a trusted person to help notice mood or behavior changes and support the agreed medication-safety plan.

Your questions, answered

What if I feel better?

Do not stop abruptly. Plan a gradual reduction with the prescriber. Withdrawal can cause nausea, dizziness, sweating, poor sleep or anxiety and may resemble returning illness.

Why such careful storage?

Dosulepin has a narrow safety margin. Lock it away from children and anyone at risk of overdose. Return unneeded supplies to a pharmacy; do not keep a stockpile.

Pregnant or breastfeeding?

Contact your prescriber before pregnancy or promptly if pregnant. It is generally avoided in pregnancy unless clearly needed. Feeding guidance differs and infant data are limited; agree on an individual plan, not a sudden stop.

What if too much is taken?

Seek emergency care immediately; do not wait for symptoms or apparent recovery. Take the pack. In the US call Poison Help, 1-800-222-1222; elsewhere use local emergency/poison services.

Storage & safety

Keep the original pack below 25°C, secured out of sight and reach of children and pets. Ask your pharmacist about safe disposal; do not share or keep expired medicine.

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://www.medicines.org.uk/emc/product/14303/pil>
 2. <https://www.medicines.org.uk/emc/product/14303/smpc>
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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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