

Paroxetine

Paxil / Paxil CR / Brisdelle

An SSRI used for depression and several anxiety conditions. The exact product matters, and stopping needs a careful plan.

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

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

Take the prescribed product consistently

Do not switch or combine brands yourself

Paxil and Paxil CR have different doses and uses · Brisdelle 7.5 mg is for menopausal hot flashes, not depression

What it is used for

Paxil treats adult depression, panic disorder, social anxiety, generalized anxiety, OCD and PTSD. Ask which symptom you are targeting.

Paxil CR treats depression, panic, social anxiety and PMDD. Brisdelle treats menopausal hot flashes. These products are not interchangeable.

How it works

Slows serotonin reuptake between nerve cells. Mood and anxiety benefit builds over time; it is not simply correcting a proven deficiency.

Other actions may contribute to dry mouth, constipation or sleepiness. The diagram does not prove a separate benefit from every target.

What to expect over time

EARLY DAYS

Nausea, sleepiness or restlessness may precede improvement. Report troublesome effects rather than waiting them out.

OVER SEVERAL WEEKS

Mood and anxiety may improve gradually; some symptoms take longer. Keep follow-ups and agree on goals for the trial.

WHEN CHANGING DOSES

Track mood, sleep and withdrawal symptoms. Do not rush a taper or assume a missed dose is harmless.

Taking your medication

Follow your prescription. Paxil and Paxil CR labels use morning dosing; Brisdelle is taken at bedtime. Ask before changing timing.

Take with or without food. Swallow CR tablets whole. PMDD schedules can differ; follow the specific days your prescriber gives you.

Avoid alcohol. Do not drive until effects are clear. Keep a refill plan: abrupt stopping or repeated misses can cause withdrawal.

When to get help

Get emergency care for fever with confusion or stiff/twitching muscles, seizure, fainting, severe allergy or major bleeding.

Report new suicidal thoughts, marked agitation or unusually high energy with little sleep promptly. Call 911 for immediate danger.

Get urgent advice for black stools, severe headache with confusion/weakness, or eye pain with vision changes; do not wait for a visit.

Early side effects

Nausea, bowel changes, dry mouth, sweating, dizziness, sleepiness or insomnia can occur. Report effects that worsen or interfere with daily life.

Other effects to discuss

Sexual difficulties and weight gain can occur. Emotional flatness deserves a review, not an automatic assumption that your dose is too high.

What to keep track of

Review mood, sleep, weight, sexual function and side effects, especially early and after dose changes. Sodium testing depends on symptoms and risk, including older age or water pills. Most people do not need routine drug levels. Warfarin users may need closer INR checks when treatment changes.

Before you start

Share all medicines and allergies, bipolar or suicidal symptoms, seizures, glaucoma, bleeding, low sodium, bone problems and kidney/liver or heart disease. Discuss pregnancy, breastfeeding and fertility concerns. Do not add another paroxetine product. Ask before starting any new over-the-counter medicine or supplement.

Medicines & interactions

MAOIs / prohibited combinations

Do not combine with MAOIs; allow at least 14 days either way. Pimozide and thioridazine are contraindicated. Linezolid and IV methylene blue need urgent specialist review.

Tamoxifen

Paroxetine can reduce its active metabolite. Ask both prescribers about an alternative antidepressant; do not stop cancer treatment yourself.

Serotonin-raising products

Check other antidepressants, tramadol, triptans, lithium, buspirone, stimulants, St. John's wort and dextromethorphan cough products before use.

Bleeding / other medicine levels

Aspirin, ibuprofen, naproxen and blood thinners increase bleeding risk. Paroxetine changes many drug levels; codeine or tramadol pain relief may decrease.

Alcohol / sedating medicines

Avoid alcohol. Sleep, allergy, anxiety and opioid medicines may worsen impairment. Ask your pharmacist to review the full list, including water pills.

Everyday tips

Use reminders and arrange refills early. Ask for help with missed doses rather than skipping, doubling or changing the schedule yourself.

Report worsening mood at any age. The antidepressant boxed warning includes increased risk through age 24, especially early or after changes.

Discuss sexual changes or weight concerns openly; treatment can be adjusted. Do not stop on your own or assume every symptom is from the drug.

Keep a current medicine list. Tell your care team promptly if pregnancy occurs; urgent safety problems should not wait for routine follow-up.

Your questions, answered

What if I miss a dose?

Take it when remembered unless the next dose is nearly due; then skip it. Never double. Repeated misses can cause dizziness, shocks or flu-like feelings.

Can I stop once I feel better?

Arrange a gradual taper, sometimes over months with smaller reductions near the end. Withdrawal and relapse differ; report symptoms so the plan can be adjusted.

Pregnancy or breastfeeding?

Discuss benefits and risks; do not abruptly stop psychiatric treatment. Early heart-defect and late newborn risks need review. Brisdelle is contraindicated in pregnancy. If nursing, report infant feeding or weight problems.

Are all versions the same?

No. Doses and approved uses differ. Brisdelle is not an antidepressant-dose substitute. If prescribed liquid for tapering, shake and measure the exact prescribed amount.

Storage & safety

Store securely in the original container and follow its temperature instructions; never share. Suspected overdose: call U.S. Poison Help 1-800-222-1222 even if initially well. Call 911 for collapse, seizure, breathing difficulty, inability to wake or imminent self-harm.

A final reminder

Not a substitute for your prescription or Medication Guide.

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/drugInfo.cfm?setid=ef3b5cbe-f9e1-c1ac-79da-cfe14e3a7e7e>
 2. <https://dailymed.nlm.nih.gov/dailymed/drugInfo.cfm?setid=502311b3-b617-4cbd-a3ab-a60f2c62880a>
 3. <https://medlineplus.gov/druginfo/meds/a698032.html>
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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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