



# Clomipramine

(Pronounced clo-mip-ra-meen)

## Why has clomipramine been prescribed?

Clomipramine is an antidepressant. These medications are prescribed to treat depression. Clomipramine is also used for phobic and obsessive disorders and also as an add on treatment for muscle weakness associated with narcolepsy.

## What are the benefits of taking clomipramine?

Antidepressants are effective in reducing the severity of the symptoms of depression. They also shorten the time to recovery and prevent depression returning.

## Are there any precautions with clomipramine?

Clomipramine is suitable for most people. As with all medicines, however, there are precautions. Your prescriber will usually check that it is safe to prescribe clomipramine, but let your prescriber know if any of the following apply to you, as extra care may be needed:

- If you have epilepsy, diabetes, glaucoma, phaeochromocytoma, porphyria or suffer from heart, liver, kidney, thyroid or prostate trouble, long term constipation or wear contact lenses.
- If you are taking any other medication especially anticoagulants such as warfarin, medication for Parkinson's disease, medication for schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, anxiety or insomnia, high blood pressure or irregular heart beat, cimetidine, terbinafine, rifampicin, HIV medications, anticonvulsants, antidepressants or strong pain killers. Also, tell your prescriber if you buy any medicine 'over the counter' from a pharmacy or supermarket. Please also tell your prescriber if you take any alternative or complementary medicine such as Chinese herbal medicines. St John's Wort should not be taken by patients prescribed clomipramine.
- If you are pregnant, breast feeding, or wish to become pregnant.
- If you have an intolerance to lactose as this is an ingredient of clomipramine capsules (but not the tablets).

## What is the usual dose of clomipramine?

The starting dose is usually 10mg to 25mg a day depending on what it is being used to treat. The dose is then usually slowly increased. The usual dose of clomipramine may be between 30mg and 250mg daily. It may take some time to get to the dose that is most suitable.

## How should clomipramine be taken?

Clomipramine is usually taken once a day, at night. However, you and your prescriber may decide that it is better for you to take the medicine at another time.

## What form does clomipramine come in?

Clomipramine is available as capsules and sustained release tablets. The capsules are available as 10mg, 25mg and 50mg. The sustained release tablets come as 75mg.

## What should be done if a dose is missed?

If you forget a dose, take it as soon as you remember. If you miss a whole day's dose – just carry on as normal with the next day's dose. If you miss more than a day's dose, speak to your prescriber.

## What will happen when clomipramine is first taken?

Clomipramine, like many medicines, does not work straight away. For example, it may take several days or even weeks for some symptoms to improve. To begin with, some people find that clomipramine may help them feel more calm and relaxed. Later, (usually in two to three weeks) other symptoms should begin to improve. Many people do not experience any side effects. However some people may experience side effects. We have listed potential side effects in the table below, whether or not they are likely to be short or long-term and what measures can be taken is also described. There are other possible side effects – we have listed only the most important ones. Ask your doctor, pharmacist or nurse if you are worried about anything else that you think might be a side effect. Further information on side effects is available in the official manufacturer's leaflet.

## Reporting side effects

The 'Yellow Card' scheme encourages patients to report any side effects that they feel may be caused by their medication. Ask your doctor, pharmacist, or nurse for the forms if you wish to report any side effects. Alternatively, telephone 0800 100 3352 or go to [www.mhra.gov.uk](http://www.mhra.gov.uk).

## Is clomipramine addictive?

Clomipramine is not addictive, but if you stop taking the medicine suddenly, you may experience unpleasant physical feelings. Symptoms are fairly common and include nausea, insomnia, electric shock sensations, diarrhoea, excess salivation, anxiety, dizziness and vivid dreams. Reducing the dose of clomipramine slowly may make these symptoms less severe.

## What about alcohol?

It is recommended that people taking clomipramine should not drink alcohol. This is because both antidepressants and alcohol can cause drowsiness. If the two are taken together, severe drowsiness can result. This can lead to falls and accidents. As well as this, drinking alcohol may make depression and anxiety worse. However, once people are used to taking medication, then *very small amounts* of alcohol may not be harmful. It pays to be very careful, because alcohol affects people in different ways, especially when they are taking medication. Never drink alcohol and drive. Discuss any concerns you have with your doctor, pharmacist or nurse.

## Is it OK to stop taking clomipramine when symptoms go away?

No. If you stop taking clomipramine, your original symptoms are very likely to return. Most people need to remain on clomipramine for at least six months after they have fully recovered. You should always discuss with your prescriber any plans you have to reduce or stop any of your prescribed medicines.

## Are there any alternatives to clomipramine?

Yes, there are alternatives available. Although antidepressants have broadly similar therapeutic effects they differ in the side effects they produce. There are more than 20 antidepressants available so most people can find one which suits them. Psychological therapies can also help in some types of depression, either as an alternative to medication or alongside it.

## Summary of side effects



### **Drowsiness - Very common**

#### **What can be done about it?**

Drowsiness tends to wear off over time. Speak to your prescriber about changing the dose or dose timings.



### **Blurred vision - Common**

#### **What can be done about it?**

This should wear off within a few days. Discuss with your prescriber if this persists. It may be necessary to switch to another medication. Symptoms will go away when switched to another medication.



### **Dry mouth – Common**

#### **What can be done about it?**

This should wear off within a few days. Sugar-free boiled sweets, chewing gum or eating citrus fruits may help. Discuss with your prescriber if this persists



### **Constipation – Very common**

#### **What can be done about it?**

Eat lots of fibre – fruit and vegetables are good sources. Drink plenty of fluids. Your prescriber may prescribe a laxative.



### **Postural hypotension – Common (low blood pressure)**

#### **What can be done about it?**

Try not to stand up too quickly. If you feel dizzy do not drive. This dizziness is not dangerous and should wear off after a few days



**Sexual dysfunction – Common (reduced libido (desire) and lack of orgasm in males and females. Impotence in males.)**

**What can be done about it?**

Any changes should be reported to your prescriber. It may be necessary to switch to another medication. Symptoms should go away when switched to another medication .

Other (less common) side effects	How common is it and what can be done about it?
Increased appetite and weight gain	<b>Uncommon</b> Try to eat healthily and take exercise.
Agitation	<b>Uncommon</b> This should wear off in a few days. Discuss with your prescriber if this persists.
Sweating	<b>Uncommon</b> Discuss this with your prescriber if it becomes troublesome.
Nausea	<b>Uncommon</b> This should wear off within a few days. Taking the medication with food may help. Discuss with your prescriber if this persists.
Tachycardia (palpitations)	<b>Rare</b> Contact your prescriber if you experience palpitations.
Urinary retention (difficulty passing water)	<b>Rare</b> Contact your prescriber if you have any difficulty passing water.

Very common = almost everyone affected  
 Common = many people affected  
 Uncommon = some people affected

Rare = few people affected  
 Very rare = very few or no one affected

## Disclaimer

This leaflet does not replace the official manufacturer's Patient Information Leaflet.

For more information, visit [www.slam.nhs.uk/meds](http://www.slam.nhs.uk/meds) or speak to a health care professional.

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