

## Patient Handout

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Patient Education  
fluoxetine oral

FLUOXETINE ENTERIC-COATED - ORAL

(flew-OX-eh-teen)

COMMON BRAND NAME(S): Prozac Weekly

**WARNING:** Antidepressant medications are used to treat a variety of conditions, including depression and other mental/mood disorders. These medications can help prevent suicidal thoughts/attempts and provide other important benefits. However, studies have shown that a small number of people (especially people younger than 25) who take antidepressants for any condition may experience worsening depression, other mental/mood symptoms, or suicidal thoughts/attempts. It is very important to talk with the doctor about the risks and benefits of antidepressant medication (especially for people younger than 25), even if treatment is not for a mental/mood condition. Tell the doctor right away if you notice worsening depression/other psychiatric conditions, unusual behavior changes (including possible suicidal thoughts/attempts), or other mental/mood changes (including new/worsening anxiety, panic attacks, trouble sleeping, irritability, hostile/angry feelings, impulsive actions, severe restlessness, very rapid speech). Be especially watchful for these symptoms when a new antidepressant is started or when the dose is changed.

**USES:** This long-acting form of fluoxetine is used to treat depression in people who have been successfully treated with the form of fluoxetine that is taken daily. Fluoxetine is a selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor (SSRI). SSRIs work by helping to restore the balance of certain natural substances in the brain (neurotransmitters such as serotonin). Fluoxetine may decrease anxiety, improve your mood, sleep, appetite, and energy level and may help restore your interest in daily living.

**HOW TO USE:** Read the Medication Guide provided by your pharmacist before you start using fluoxetine and each time you get a refill. If you have any questions, ask your doctor or pharmacist. Take this medication by mouth as directed by your doctor, usually once a week with or without food. Swallow the capsule whole. Do not crush or chew the contents of the capsule. Start taking this medication 7 days after your last dose of the form of fluoxetine that is taken daily. The dosage is based on your medical condition and response to treatment. Use this medication regularly in order to get the most benefit from it. To help you remember, take it on the same day of the week. Mark a calendar to help you remember when you should take your next dose. Keep taking this medication even if you feel well. Do not stop taking this medication without first consulting your doctor. Some conditions may become worse when the drug is abruptly stopped. Your dose may need to be gradually decreased. Tell your doctor if your condition does not improve or if it worsens.

**SIDE EFFECTS:** See also Warning section. Nausea, drowsiness, dizziness, anxiety, trouble sleeping, loss of appetite, tiredness, sweating, or yawning may occur. If any of these effects last or get worse, tell your doctor promptly. Remember that this medication has been prescribed because your doctor has judged that the benefit to you is greater than the risk of side effects. Many people using this medication do not have serious side effects. Tell your doctor right away if you have any serious side effects, including: unusual or severe mental/mood changes (such as agitation, unusual high energy/excitement, thoughts of suicide), easy bleeding/bruising, muscle weakness/spasm, shakiness (tremor), decreased interest in sex, changes in sexual ability, unusual weight loss. Get medical help

right away if you have any very serious side effects, including: black stools, vomit that looks like coffee grounds, seizures, signs of kidney problems (such as change in the amount of urine), eye pain/swelling/redness, widened pupils, vision changes (such as seeing rainbows around lights at night, blurred vision). If you have diabetes, fluoxetine may affect your blood sugar levels. Monitor your blood sugar regularly and share the results with your doctor. Your doctor may need to adjust your medication, diet, and exercise when you start or stop fluoxetine. This medication may increase serotonin and rarely cause a very serious condition called serotonin syndrome/toxicity. The risk increases if you are also taking other drugs that increase serotonin, so tell your doctor or pharmacist of all the drugs you take (see Drug Interactions section). Get medical help right away if you develop some of the following symptoms: fast heartbeat, hallucinations, loss of coordination, severe dizziness, severe nausea/vomiting/diarrhea, twitching muscles, unexplained fever, unusual agitation/restlessness. Rarely, males may have a painful or prolonged erection lasting 4 or more hours. If this occurs, stop using this drug and get medical help right away, or permanent problems could occur. A very serious allergic reaction to this drug is rare. However, get medical help right away if you notice any symptoms of a serious allergic reaction, including: rash, itching/swelling (especially of the face/tongue/throat), severe dizziness, trouble breathing. This is not a complete list of possible side effects. If you notice other effects not listed above, contact your doctor or pharmacist. In the US - Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects. You may report side effects to FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088 or at [www.fda.gov/medwatch](http://www.fda.gov/medwatch). In Canada - Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects. You may report side effects to Health Canada at 1-866-234-2345.

**PRECAUTIONS:** Before taking fluoxetine, tell your doctor or pharmacist if you are allergic to it; or if you have any other allergies. This product may contain inactive ingredients, which can cause allergic reactions or other problems. Talk to your pharmacist for more details. Before using this medication, tell your doctor or pharmacist your medical history, especially of: personal or family history of bipolar/manic-depressive disorder, personal or family history of suicide attempts, liver problems, diabetes, low sodium in the blood (such as may occur while taking "water pills" - diuretics), dehydration, seizures, intestinal ulcers/bleeding (peptic ulcer disease), personal or family history of glaucoma (angle-closure type). This drug may make you dizzy or drowsy. Alcohol or marijuana (cannabis) can make you more dizzy or drowsy. Do not drive, use machinery, or do anything that needs alertness until you can do it safely. Avoid alcoholic beverages. Talk to your doctor if you are using marijuana (cannabis). Before having surgery, tell your doctor or dentist about all the products you use (including prescription drugs, nonprescription drugs, and herbal products). Children may be more sensitive to the side effects of this drug, especially weight loss. Monitor weight and height in children who are taking this drug. Older adults may be more sensitive to the side effects of this drug, especially bleeding and loss of coordination. Loss of coordination can increase the risk of falling. Older adults may also be more likely to develop low sodium in the blood, especially if they are taking "water pills" (diuretics). During pregnancy, this medication should be used only when clearly needed. It may harm an unborn baby. Also, babies born to mothers who have used this drug during the last 3 months of pregnancy may rarely develop withdrawal symptoms such as feeding/breathing difficulties, seizures, muscle stiffness, or constant crying. If you notice any of these symptoms in your newborn, tell the doctor promptly. Since untreated mental/mood problems (such as depression, post traumatic stress disorder) can be a serious condition, do not stop taking this medication unless directed by your doctor. If you are planning pregnancy, become pregnant, or think you may be pregnant, immediately discuss the benefits and risks of using this medication during pregnancy with your doctor. This medication passes into breast milk and may have undesirable effects on a nursing infant. Consult your doctor before breast-feeding.

**DRUG INTERACTIONS:** Drug interactions may change how your medications work or increase your risk for serious side effects. This document does not contain all possible drug interactions. Keep a list of all the products you use (including prescription/nonprescription drugs and herbal products) and share it with your doctor and pharmacist. Do not start, stop, or change the dosage of any medicines without your doctor's approval. Fluoxetine can stay in your body for many weeks after your last dose and may interact with many other medications. Before using any medication, tell your doctor or

pharmacist if you have taken fluoxetine in the previous 5 weeks. Some products that may interact with this drug are: other drugs that can cause bleeding/bruising (including antiplatelet drugs such as clopidogrel, NSAIDs such as ibuprofen/naproxen, "blood thinners" such as dabigatran/warfarin). Taking MAO inhibitors with this medication may cause a serious (possibly fatal) drug interaction. Avoid taking MAO inhibitors (isocarboxazid, linezolid, metaxalone, methylene blue, moclobemide, phenelzine, procarbazine, rasagiline, safinamide, selegiline, tranylcypromine) during treatment with this medication. Most MAO inhibitors should also not be taken for 2 weeks before and at least 5 weeks after treatment with this medication. Ask your doctor when to start or stop taking this medication. This medication can slow down the removal of other medications from your body, which may affect how they work. Examples of affected drugs include pimozide, thioridazine, vinblastine, antiarrhythmics (such as propafenone, flecainide), tricyclic antidepressants (such as desipramine, imipramine), among others. Aspirin can increase the risk of bleeding when used with this medication. However, if your doctor has directed you to take low-dose aspirin for heart attack or stroke prevention (usually 81-162 milligrams a day), you should continue taking it unless your doctor instructs you otherwise. The risk of serotonin syndrome/toxicity increases if you are also taking other drugs that increase serotonin. Examples include street drugs such as MDMA/"ecstasy," St. John's wort, certain antidepressants (including other SSRIs such as citalopram/paroxetine, SNRIs such as duloxetine/venlafaxine), tryptophan, among others. The risk of serotonin syndrome/toxicity may be more likely when you start or increase the dose of these drugs. Tell your doctor or pharmacist if you are taking other products that cause drowsiness including alcohol, marijuana (cannabis), antihistamines (such as cetirizine, diphenhydramine), drugs for sleep or anxiety (such as alprazolam, diazepam, zolpidem), muscle relaxants, and opioid pain relievers (such as codeine). Check the labels on all your medicines (such as allergy or cough-and-cold products) because they may contain ingredients that cause drowsiness. Ask your pharmacist about using those products safely. This medication may interfere with certain medical/laboratory tests (including brain scan for Parkinson's disease), possibly causing false test results. Make sure laboratory personnel and all your doctors know you use this drug.

**OVERDOSE:** If someone has overdosed and has serious symptoms such as passing out or trouble breathing, call 911. Otherwise, call a poison control center right away. US residents can call their local poison control center at 1-800-222-1222. Canada residents can call a provincial poison control center. Symptoms of overdose may include: fast/irregular heartbeat, severe dizziness, fainting.

**NOTES:** Do not share this medication with others. Keep all regular medical and psychiatric appointments.

**MISSED DOSE:** If you miss a dose, ask your doctor or pharmacist right away for a new dosing schedule. Do not double the dose to catch up.

**STORAGE:** Store at room temperature away from light and moisture. Do not store in the bathroom. Keep all medications away from children and pets. Do not flush medications down the toilet or pour them into a drain unless instructed to do so. Properly discard this product when it is expired or no longer needed. Consult your pharmacist or local waste disposal company.

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**IMPORTANT: HOW TO USE THIS INFORMATION:** This is a summary and does NOT have all possible information about this product. This information does not assure that this product is safe, effective, or appropriate for you. This information is not individual medical advice and does not substitute for the advice of your health care professional. Always ask your health care professional for complete information about this product and your specific health needs.

**TOP PICKS FOR YOU**