

TRAMADOL (ULTRAM)

Tramadol is FDA approved for the treatment of musculoskeletal pain. Studies have shown it is useful in treating the pain associated with diabetic neuropathy and other pain conditions.

Tramadol comes in 50 mg tablets. The maximum dose is two tablets four times per day unless your kidney function is below normal or you are over 75 years old, in which case the maximum dose is two tablets three times per day.

The main side effects of Tramadol are drowsiness, sedation, and stomach upset, all of which are minimized by slowly raising the dose. About 5% of patients have stomach upset at any dose of Tramadol and cannot take the medicine. Other risks include seizures (occur in less than 1/100,000 and are more likely if you have seizures) and possibly abuse (relevant if you have abused drugs in the past).

Tramadol should be started at a low dose and raise the dose slowly toward the maximum dose.

Start with one tablet at bedtime.

After 3 - 7 days, increase to one tablet twice daily (morning and bedtime).

After an additional 3 - 7 days, increase to one tablet three times per day (morning, noon, and bedtime).

After an additional 3 - 7 days, increase to one tablet four times per day (1 tablet with each meal and 1 at bedtime).

At that point, the dose may be increased or adjusted depending on how you are doing.

To increase further, you will:

Add a second tablet at bedtime (one tablet three times per day and two tablets at bedtime).

After 3 - 7 days, add a second tablet to another dose (one tablet twice per day and two tablets twice per day).

After an additional 3 - 7 days, add a second tablet to another dose (one tablet once per day and two tablets three times per day).

After an additional 3 - 7 days, add a second tablet to the final dose (two tablets four times per day).

No blood monitoring is needed while you take Tramadol.

TRAMADOL (By mouth) Tramadol (TRA-ma-dole)

Treats moderate-to-severe pain in adults who require around-the-clock treatment for an extended period of time.

Brand Name(s): Ultram, DispenseQuick Tramadol Hydrochloride, Ultram ER

There may be other brand names for this medicine.

When This Medicine Should Not Be Used:

You should not use this medicine if you have had an allergic reaction to tramadol or other narcotic pain medicines such as codeine, MS Contin®, OxyContin®, Percocet®, or Vicodin®. In some situations, you should not use this medicine if you are also using alcohol, street drugs, sedatives, medicines for depression or mental illness, or other pain medicines. If you are using any of these, ask your doctor if you can still use tramadol.

How to Use This Medicine:

Tablet, Long Acting Tablet

- Your doctor will tell you how much of this medicine to use and how often. Your dose may need to be changed several times in order to find out what works best for you. Do not use more medicine or use it more often than your doctor tells you to.
- Swallow the extended-release tablet whole. Do not crush, break, or chew it.
- You may take this medicine with or without food.
- Drink plenty of fluids to help avoid constipation.

If a dose is missed:

- If you miss a dose or forget to use your medicine, use it as soon as you can. If it is almost time for your next dose, wait until then to use the medicine and skip the missed dose. Do not use extra medicine to make up for a missed dose.

How to Store and Dispose of This Medicine:

- Store the medicine in a closed container at room temperature, away from heat, moisture, and direct light.
- Ask your pharmacist, doctor, or health caregiver about the best way to dispose of any outdated medicine or medicine no longer needed.
- Keep all medicine away from children and never share your medicine with anyone.

Drugs and Foods to Avoid:

Ask your doctor or pharmacist before using any other medicine, including over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal products.

- Make sure your doctor knows if you are using digoxin (Lanoxin®), cyclobenzaprine (Flexeril®), promethazine (Phenergan®), a blood thinner (Coumadin®), an MAO inhibitor (Eldepryl®, Marplan®, Nardil®, Parnate®), medicine for depression (such as amitriptyline, imipramine, Effexor®, Paxil®, Prozac®, Serzone®, Zoloft®), medicine for mental illness (such as clozapine, olanzapine, risperidone, Clozaril®, Risperdal®, Zyprexa®), or medicine for seizures (such as carbamazepine, Dilantin®, Tegretol®). Tell your doctor if you are using ketoconazole (Nizoral®), erythromycin (Ery-tab®), rifampin (Rimactane®), or St. John's Wort.
- Tell your doctor if you are using any medicines that make you sleepy. These include sleeping pills, cold and allergy medicine, narcotic pain relievers, and sedatives.
- Do not drink alcohol while you are using this medicine.

Warnings While Using This Medicine:

- Make sure your doctor knows if you are pregnant or breastfeeding, or if you have epilepsy, kidney disease, liver disease, breathing problems, or ulcers or other digestive problems. Tell your doctor if you have a history of head injury, seizures, or drug or alcohol dependence.
- This medicine can increase thoughts of suicide. All of the warnings in this leaflet are true for a person who is using this medicine. Tell your doctor right away if you start to feel more depressed.

Also tell your doctor right away if you have thoughts about hurting yourself. Report any unusual thoughts or behaviors that trouble you, especially if they are new or get worse quickly. Make sure your caregiver knows if you have trouble sleeping, get upset easily, have a big increase in energy, or start to act reckless. Also tell your doctor if you have sudden or strong feelings, such as feeling nervous, angry, restless, violent, or scared. Let your doctor know if you or anyone in your family has bipolar disorder (manic-depressive) or has tried to commit suicide.

- This medicine may make you dizzy or drowsy. Avoid driving, using machines, or doing anything else that could be dangerous if you are not alert.
- This medicine may be habit-forming. If you feel that the medicine is not working as well, do not use more than your prescribed dose. Call your doctor for instructions.
- Do not stop using this medicine suddenly without asking your doctor. You may need to slowly decrease your dose before stopping it completely.
- Make sure any doctor or dentist who treats you knows that you are using this medicine.
- This medicine may cause constipation. This is more common if you use it for a long time. Ask your doctor if you should also use a laxative to prevent and treat constipation.

Possible Side Effects While Using This Medicine:

Call your doctor right away if you notice any of these side effects:

- Allergic reaction: Itching or hives, swelling in your face or hands, swelling or tingling in your mouth or throat, chest tightness, trouble breathing.
- Blistering, peeling, red skin rash.
- Lightheadedness, dizziness, or fainting.
- Seizures.
- Severe sleepiness or unusual drowsiness.
- Trouble breathing.

If you notice these less serious side effects, talk with your doctor:

- Dry mouth.
- Feeling nervous, anxious, shaky, or unusually happy.
- Headache.
- Increased sweating, mild itching.
- Loss of appetite.
- Muscle stiffness.
- Nausea, vomiting, constipation, or diarrhea.
- Tiredness or weakness.
- Trouble sleeping.
- Warmth or redness in your face, neck, arms, or upper chest.

If you notice other side effects that you think are caused by this medicine, tell your doctor.

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