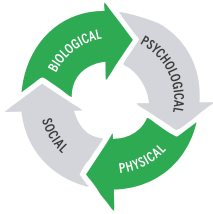


Olanzapine



There is a lot of money available for research on medications, some of it from pharmaceutical companies and some from independent researchers who are not sponsored by pharmaceutical companies, so there is a lot of research into medications. Remember, more thumbs up just means that more people have done research that shows that this approach does work.

What is it?

Olanzapine is a medicine that's licensed for people aged 18 years or older. It's available in syrup, tablets, melt-in-the mouth tablets and injection form. The normal dose is between 5–20mg daily.

What does it aim to do?

Olanzapine can reduce symptoms such as unusual and distressing thoughts and experiences (hearing and seeing things or having strong upsetting beliefs) as well as reversing slowed movement and slowed thoughts.

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE)

NICE recommends that people should be offered counselling about their diet and lifestyle (i.e. exercise and activity) when they start taking Olanzapine to help reduce the chances of putting on weight and the problems that come with weight gain.

What are the side-effects of Olanzapine?

In adults, very common side-effects are weight gain, tiredness and metabolism changes, as well as a drop in blood pressure, and risk of falling over.

In young people, there is a particularly high risk of weight gain, as well as hormone and metabolism changes if you take Olanzapine. It's more likely to cause weight gain than all the other medicines in this booklet but not everyone will put on weight when they take it.

Less common side-effects (between 1 in 10 and 1 in 100 people) of Olanzapine include not being able to poo, or weeing when you don't mean to, feeling weak, dizzy or restless, having a fast heart rate, dry mouth, fever, joint pain, skin rashes, swollen hands or feet, speech problems or problems controlling movement, having pneumonia.

“Olanzapine has proven benefit for psychotic symptoms. Olanzapine is especially associated with feeling tired and putting on weight but some people find the calming effect of Olanzapine helpful.”

Dr Richard Whale, EIP Consultant Psychiatrist

How can I get this treatment?

Olanzapine can only be prescribed by your GP or mental health team. You can't buy it over the counter.

✓ Main pro

Olanzapine is good at reducing unusual and distressing thoughts and experiences. It also helps people to feel calm and has fewer movement-related side-effects (like shakiness and stiffness) than some medicines.

✗ Main con

Olanzapine has a major side-effect of weight gain which happens more than with most other medicines. In tests of Olanzapine, over half of people dropped out of the studies because of weight gain. As with all studies of these medicines, it's hard to find out exactly how many people will have these side-effects as people often drop out of trials.



“ I did take Olanzapine but it made me feel permanently jet-lagged. I couldn't tolerate it and I found the risk of weight gain unacceptable. ”

Catherine, 31

“ Olanzapine seemed to work quickly in helping to stabilize my mood and reduce my agitation. However, at higher doses I found this medication to be quite sedating which made it difficult to concentrate and carry out daily tasks. An optimum dose was found that didn't have such a sedative effect but was still effective in keeping my mood stable which worked well. ”

Alex, 19