

ABOUT DEPRESSION MEDICINES

FACT SHEET

What you need to know about your antidepressant

Many things keep you strong – your spirit, your family, your elders, your community and your country. Depression is an illness that can stop you feeling strong inside.

Medicines can help you heal

Medicines called antidepressants can help you cope better with worries or sadness.



Different antidepressant medicines work better for different people. It might take a while to find the right one for you.



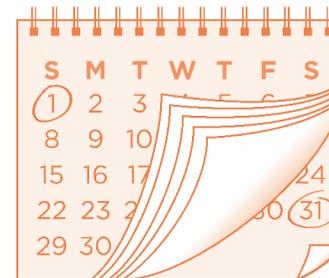
Medicines can help build your spirit so you can be strong again.

It takes time to heal

Feeling strong again takes time. It is important to take your medicine every day.



It might be 2 to 4 weeks before you start to feel better.



To make sure you stay strong inside, you must take your medicine for at least 6 months, or longer as agreed with your doctor.

If you stop taking your medicine too early the depression can return.

Other ways to heal

There are many ways to treat depression. Support from your family, community and culture is important.



Look after yourself by eating good tucker, getting good sleep, and being active every day.

It's good to stop smoking and avoid drinking alcohol. Don't take drugs like cannabis, ice or other people's prescription medicines.



Talking to a counsellor or mental health worker can help you get strong again.

Changes (side effects) in your body

You may notice some changes, called side effects, in your body after you start your medicine.

You may not get any side effects, or you may only get 1 or 2. Many side effects will go away or reduce after 1 or 2 weeks.

Keep taking your medicine. Don't take less or stop your medicine suddenly.

Talk to your doctor or health worker or go back to the clinic straight away if the changes trouble you, you feel worse than before or you think about hurting yourself.

Find out more:

- Visit www.nps.org.au/depression for more about medicines
- Call Medicines Line on **1300 MEDICINE** (1300 633 424) to talk to someone about your medicine
- Visit www.beyondblue.org.au for more about depression and other treatments
- Visit www.headspace.org.au/yarn-safe to find out about support for young people

Possible side effects of antidepressant medicines

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|  |  |  |  |  |
| Headache | Rash | Dizziness | Sweating | Sleep troubles |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Upset tummy | If you feel sick, take with food or milk. | Feeling jumpy | Problems with sex | Putting on weight |

If any of these last for more than 2 weeks or make you feel much worse, go back to the clinic.

Advice for all antidepressant medicines

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| Don't use alcohol (grog), cannabis and ice – they stop the medicine working and make side effects worse. | Don't drive or operate machinery if you feel sleepy. | Don't stop taking your medicine suddenly – you may feel very sick. | Go back to the clinic if you feel worse or think about hurting yourself after starting your medicine. |

Illustration source: Centre for Remote Health (2014). Medicines Book for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practitioners and Health Workers (3rd Edition). Alice Springs: Centre for Remote Health.