

“Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Antidepressant Medication but Were Afraid to Ask”

Q. Can I drink alcohol if I take antidepressants?

A. For most of the newer antidepressants you can get drunk much more quickly; (tolerance is less), with resultant memory loss, blackouts, judgment problems and driving impairment.

On certain antidepressants some people get very nauseated and ill and feel very low and sad the next day. Most troublesome is the fact that the antidepressants you take cannot work well if you drink regularly while taking them.

Q. Are there any permanent bad effects if I have to take antidepressants for a long time?

A. No. None are known at this time.

Q. How long should I take an antidepressant?

A. It depends on the illness for which you take them (anxiety, depression, eating disorder, etc) the severity and length or repeated episodes of the illness.

Q. Will I become suicidal?

A. Studies show that the highest suicide risk is in the month before starting antidepressant treatment. However, for some very depressed people, there is an increased risk as they regain the energy to act when they start an antidepressant. Also those with severe mood swings or a family history of bipolar illness may become more impulsive and need to see their doctor frequently at the start of antidepressant therapy.

Q. Will I gain weight?

A. No for most antidepressants – they help control appetite. Yes for some and then a change of medication is indicated.

Q. Any sexual side effects?

A. Yes for some antidepressants. These can be treated or a change to another antidepressant is indicated. It is not permanent.