

Viloxazine

Viloxazine (Qelbree) is a non-stimulant medication that treats attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Its benefits build up gradually over 2-4 weeks. Although it is only FDA-approved in childhood ADHD, it can also work in adults.

Viloxazine has been used in Europe since the 1970's to treat depression.

Viloxazine is not safe in bipolar disorder because it has an antidepressant structure. It was originally developed as an antidepressant but did not work well in depression.

It is similar to another antidepressant that is used in ADHD, atomoxetine (Strattera).

How it works

Viloxazine modulates serotonin and norepinephrine, and moderately increases dopamine in the brain. These neurotransmitters are involved in ADHD and depression.

Unlike stimulants for ADHD, viloxazine does not have abuse potential and is not a controlled substance.

How should I take it?

Viloxazine comes as an extended release capsule and is taken once a day, morning or night, with or without food. If it causes fatigue, take at night.

Capsules can be opened and sprinkled onto applesauce or other foods.

What if I forget a dose?

Take the missed dose as soon as you remember it. However, if it is almost time for the next dose, skip the missed dose and continue your

regular dosing schedule. Do not take a double dose to make up for a missed one.

How long do I need to take it?

How long you need to take it will depend on your condition. Often symptoms of ADHD improve with age or changes in life circumstances and the medication can be tapered off.

Key Points

1. Viloxazine treats ADHD and depression.
2. It takes 2-4 weeks to work.
3. It is well tolerated but can cause fatigue.

What happens if I stop it?

Viloxazine is not addictive and does not cause significant withdrawal symptoms.

Side effects

Drowsiness happens in 15% of patients.

Decreased appetite, headache, nausea, abdominal pain, and insomnia can happen on it. Taking viloxazine in divided doses may help prevent stomach distress. Viloxazine may reduce sex drive.

Viloxazine can increase heart rate and high blood pressure. In bipolar disorder, it can worsen mood, and very rarely it is associated with suicide ideation.

As you are starting the medicine, use caution when driving or performing tasks that require alertness. This should not be a problem once you have adjusted to the medicine and know how it affects you.

Pregnancy: Viloxazine has not been adequately evaluated during pregnancy. It is unknown if viloxazine secreted in breast milk.

Overdose

Viloxazine is relatively safe in overdose.

Interactions

Viloxazine can increase levels of medications metabolized by CYP1A2, including caffeine, olanzapine, clozapine, and duloxetine.

Do not take with MAOI antidepressants.

The web sites below help you check for drug interactions. You should talk with us about the information you find as many drug interactions have only a mild effect:

reference.medscape.com/drug-interactionchecker

How to store and dispose of medication

- Keep out of the reach of children.
- Store away from heat, direct light and damp places.
- To safely dispose of unwanted pills: Do not pour in the toilet or sink (it will enter the water supply). To prevent children or pets from eating it, mix unwanted pills in a bag with a little water and inedible trash (such as coffee grounds or kitty litter) and throw in the trash.

Cost and insurance coverage

Viloxazine is available in generic. If you are paying out-of-pocket, the lowest cost is usually found at www.goodrx.com.

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Brands	Qelbree
Dose range	<i>Typical doses:</i> Children 6-11: 100 mg/day Children 12-17: 200 mg/day Adults: 200 mg/day Maximum dose: 400 mg/day
Sizes	Capsules: 100, 150, 200 mg
Release date	4/2/2021
FDA-approval	ADHD

—Chris Aiken, MD, updated 7/26/2025