

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ON TRAMADOL

What is Tramadol?

Tramadol is a man-made (synthetic) narcotic analgesic (pain reliever).

What is Tramadol used for?

Tramadol acts as a pain reliever and is prescribed to patients suffering from moderate to severe pain.

How does Tramadol work as a pain reliever?

Once Tramadol enters the body, it attaches to the brain's pain receptors and ultimately blocks the sensation of pain. Tramadol works primarily by acting directly on the brain. The primary mode of action is to decrease the brain's perception of pain. However, unlike most narcotic agents, the Tramadol effect is very mild (1/10 of that of morphine). This is responsible for its low addiction risk.

When does Tramadol become harmful?

- The medicinal benefits of tramadol can quickly become harmful when it's not taken as prescribed.
- Excess amounts, regular use or overuse can cause side effects, many of which can be dangerous and may affect the brain in ways very similar to illegal drugs.
- Taking -tramadol for recreational reasons.

What are the side effects of Tramadol?

- Headache, dizziness, drowsiness, tired feeling;
- Constipation, diarrhea, nausea, vomiting, stomach pain;
- Feeling nervous or anxious; or
- Itching, sweating, and flushing (warmth, redness, or tingly feeling).
- Noisy breathing, sighing, shallow breathing;
- A slow heart rate or weak pulse;
- A light-headed feeling, like you might pass out;
- Seizure (convulsions);
- Infertility, missed menstrual periods;
- Impotence, sexual problems, loss of interest in sex;

What are the dangers of mixing Tramadol with other substances?

Taking Tramadol with other drugs which are not prescribed by your Doctor can lead to harmful effects and increase the chance of addiction. The combination of Tramadol and other substances, either alcohol or drugs can cause threatening or even fatal side effects. Both alcohol and Tramadol are central nervous system depressants, and both agents slow down brain activity and function which can lead to the following:

- Confusion
- Loss of consciousness
- [Brain damage](#)
- [Respiratory depression](#)
- Increase depression and suicidal tendencies

Tramadol and other drug interactions can result in,

- Acute alcohol intoxication
- Acute abdominal conditions
- Tramadol/drug dependence
- Intracranial pressure, Liver disease
- Renal dysfunction
- Respiratory depression,
- Seizure disorders and other dangerous effects.

Is Tramadol safe to be used in children?

Generally, Tramadol should not be given to children younger than 16 years old. Research has shown that, Tramadol in children provides superior analgesic effects as compared to the controlled group. However there are already some cases and clinical studies where Tramadol is used on children especially after surgery to minimize the pain.

What are the signs of Tramadol overdose?

Tramadol is a depressant, which means it slows down the function of the central nervous system. It slows the rate of lung and heart functions. The following may result when there is an overdose

- Confusion
- Drowsiness
- Vomiting
- Bluish discoloration to lips and fingernails
- Shallow breathing

- Coma
- Death may occur if breathing becomes too weak.

What are the signs of Tramadol withdrawal symptoms?

A person who has become physically dependent on Tramadol may experience the effects of withdrawal if the abuser suddenly stops using the drug.

Signs of Tramadol withdrawal include:

- Sweating,
- Chills,
- Nausea,
- Vomiting,
- Diarrhoea,
- Restlessness,
- Body aches,
- Cramps,
- Bone pain.

How can you detect Tramadol misuse and dependence?

Clients repeated requests for tramadol and their refusal to consider other pain relievers. Such clients usually approach pharmacy staff with well-rehearsed scripts and resort to visiting one facility to another, termed “pharmacy hopping”, when they are denied sale of their desired product

How can Pharmacists help reduce the risk of Tramadol misuse?

Pharmacists can help by removing Tramadol displayed at point of sale, refusing or restricting the sale only with a prescription and also by providing information and making direct interventions through questioning.

What is the FDA doing to control the supply of Tramadol?

Tramadol is regulated as a controlled substance. Going forward, the FDA will:

1. Strengthen public awareness campaign on the dangers of misuse of Tramadol
2. Strengthen the follow-up inspections to monitor the distribution records of importers and manufacturers of Tramadol.
3. Variation of labeling to include the following:
 - Potential for addiction.
 - Do not use unless on medical advice

4. Collaborate with the Pharmacy Council to undertake the following
 - restrictions on the display of Tramadol on the shelves in the Community Pharmacies (to be distributed as Controlled drug, under lock and key)
 - strictly enforce distribution of Tramadol as a controlled drug (to require Pharmacies keep a record of prescriptions dispensed with a copy of the valid prescription)

How can pharmacists raise public awareness of misuse of tramadol pain relievers?

Pharmacists can help by providing the right information on Tramadol in order to enable clients make informed decisions and also demand valid prescriptions before dispensing of these products.

For further clarification contact FDA on

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