

Topamax (topiramate)



What is it usually prescribed for?

Seizures (convulsions) and migraine prevention. It is sometimes also used for bipolar disorder and weight loss.



How does it work?

In bipolar disorder, Topamax helps improve mood, thinking, and behavior. Topamax works by reducing excessive brain activity and release of brain chemicals.



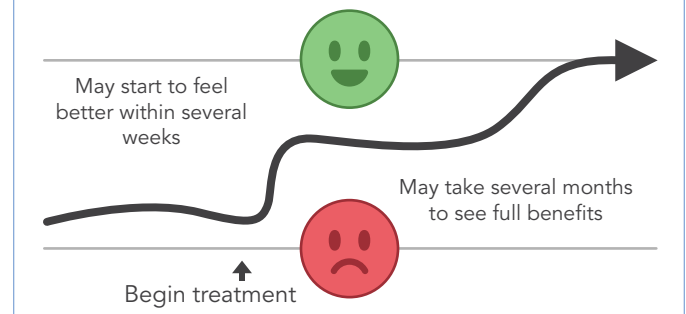
What should I expect?

Topamax is usually taken as an add-on medicine to treat bipolar disorder. It may take several months for you to feel the full benefits of taking this medicine. Some symptoms may improve within several weeks.

Your healthcare professional will start with a low dose that is slowly increased to find the best dose that works for you. Tell your healthcare professional how it's working for you and if you have any side effects, so the dose can be changed if needed.

Your healthcare professional may check your blood bicarbonate levels to monitor for metabolic acidosis, or

WHEN WILL I FEEL BETTER?



a buildup of acid in the body due to kidney disease or failure.

Take Topamax exactly as prescribed to get the full benefit of this medicine.



Will I have side effects?

You may or may not have side effects when taking Topamax. The chance of some side effects increases with larger doses.

In most cases, treatment is necessary for a long time to control symptoms. Long treatment may increase the chances of some side effects like changes in blood sodium, skin rash, and suicidal thoughts.

What are common side effects and what can I do to feel better?

If your side effects are mild, talk to your healthcare professional about them at your next appointment.

	Drink plenty of water	Drink less alcohol	Eat small meals more often	Healthcare professional suggestion
Feeling drowsy	X	X		
Feeling dizzy	X	X		
Feeling tired		X		
Nausea	X	X	X	
Feeling less hungry	X		X	
Feeling unsteady		X		
Thinking problems		X		

Note: This is not a complete list of side effects; other side effects are possible. Before starting Topamax, tell your healthcare professional about all the medicines you are taking to avoid unexpected side effects.



Neuroscience Education Institute

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YOU'RE NOT ALONE!

In 2020, Topamax was prescribed nearly 11.5 million times in the United States.

What should I avoid?






Don't start any new medicines, over-the-counter drugs, or herbal remedies without talking to your healthcare professional first. There are interactions with medicines that may increase your chance of serious side effects.

Do not suddenly stop taking Topamax unless your healthcare professional has told you to, because your symptoms may return.

Use less alcohol and recreational drugs. They may decrease the benefits of Topamax and increase the chance of side effects.

Avoid pregnancy while taking this medicine. Topamax is associated with birth defects and may decrease the levels and effects of oral contraceptives (birth control pills).

WHAT IS MOST IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER

-  It may take up to several months for you to feel the full benefits of taking this medicine
-  Tell your healthcare professional about any troubling side effects so that you can work together to address them
-  Do not suddenly stop taking this medicine unless told to do so by your healthcare professional
-  Don't start any new medicines, over-the-counter drugs, or herbal remedies without talking to your healthcare professional
-  Get medical care right away if you have serious side effects



When should I call a healthcare professional right away or visit the emergency room?

If you have any **serious** side effects. Here are some examples of serious side effects:

- Thoughts of suicide or are planning to hurt yourself
- A skin rash
- Irregular heartbeats, feeling tired, loss of appetite, trouble thinking, feeling short of breath
- Vomiting, unexplained weakness, feeling like you might pass out
- Vision problems, blurred vision, eye pain, or redness, sudden vision loss

If you think there has been an overdose, call your poison control center (800-222-1222) or get medical care right away.



Where can I get more help?

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) – [nami.org](https://www.nami.org)

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline – Call 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

Crisis Text Line – Text “HELLO” to 741741



Notes and questions for my next appointment

