

Flibanserin

Flibanserin (Addyi) is a medication that is FDA-approved for low sexual desire in women who have not been through menopause. In research studies that extended beyond its FDA approval, it was also found to help sexual function in post-menopausal women. Low sexual desire is a common problem which impacts 34–40% of women.

How it works

Flibanserin affects many of the neurotransmitters involved in depression (e.g. serotonin, norepinephrine and dopamine) and was originally developed as an antidepressant. It did not treat depression, but in those original studies it improved sexual functioning in 70% of women (no major change was seen in men). Further studies in women without depression lead to its FDA-approval.

The main studies of flibanserin involved 2,997 women who have not been through menopause, so that is the population it is FDA-approved for. Beyond that, the medicine has also been studied in post-menopausal women (949 women) and was safe and effective in that population.

Flibanserin was studied in men but only in the antidepressant trials, but did not significantly improve sexual function.

How should I take it?

Take the medicine every night at bed, whether you plan to have sex or not. Taking it at night helps avoid the risk of fatigue and low blood pressure while on it.

What if I forget a dose?

If you miss a dose, wait until the next evening to take your next dose. Do not take a double dose to make up for a missed one.

How long do I need to take it?

It can take up to 16 weeks for flibanserin to work fully. At that point you can decide with your clinician if it is helpful to you and whether you plan to stay on it. In the studies (which involved 2,997 women) people took the medicine for as long as 1.5 years.

Key Points

1. Do not drink alcohol while on flibanserin, as there is a risk of fainting with alcohol use (at any time of day while taking this medicine).
2. The medicine should be stopped if there is no improvement after 3-4 months.
3. Take flibanserin every night (not just when you have sex)

What happens if I stop it?

There are no known withdrawal problems from stopping it.

Side effects

90% of women found flibanserin tolerable enough to stay on it. The most common side effects are dizziness, fatigue, nausea, dry mouth and trouble sleeping.

When women who took the medicine drank alcohol, there was a greater risk of low blood pressure and fainting.

Because flibanserin can cause tiredness, you should know how it affects you before driving.

Pregnancy: This medicine has not been adequately evaluated during pregnancy. It is secreted in breast milk.

Interactions

Flibanserin has a few significant drug interactions. The following can raise its levels: verapamil, grapefruit juice, as well as some SSRI antidepressants, some reflux medications

and some antibiotics. The following can lower its levels: carbamazepine, phenytoin, phenobarbital, St John's Wort, and some antibiotics can also lower its levels. This is not a comprehensive list; if you are starting a new drug you can check for interactions at:

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

Flibanserin is only available in branded form as Addyi (100mg tablets) and may not be covered by insurance. Coupons for flibanserin may be available through our office or at www.addyi.com.

Quick facts

Brand	Addyi
Dose range	100mg/day
Sizes	Tabs: 100mg
Release date	8/18/2015
FDA-approval	Acquired, generalized Hypoactive Sexual Desire Disorder (HSDD) in premenopausal women.

—Chris Aiken, MD, updated 11/11/2015



Acknowledgement of Risk with Alcohol and Flibanserin

I understand that I must not drink alcohol while taking flibanserin (Addyi). Drinking alcohol during treatment with flibanserin (Addyi) has been shown to increase the risk of severe low blood pressure and fainting (loss of consciousness).

- If I feel lightheaded or dizzy, I will lie down right away and seek medical help if these symptoms do not go away.
- If I faint (lose consciousness), I will tell my healthcare provider as soon as possible.
- I understand that I should only take Addyi at bedtime.
- If I miss a dose, I will skip the missed dose. I will take my next dose the next day at bedtime.

I understand the instructions that my healthcare provider has given to me.