

Ondansetron (Zofran)

Ondansetron is a nausea medication that also helps several psychiatric conditions:

- Obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD)
- Binge drinking (alcohol use disorder)
- Binge eating disorder

Ondansetron is very effective for compulsive problems and well-tolerated. It is similar to another medication (granisetron)

How it works

Ondansetron treats compulsivity by blocking serotonin 5-HT_{3A} receptors in the brain. Although it blocks serotonin there, it does not cause depression because this receptor is different from the ones that SSRI antidepressants act on.

How should I take it?

Ondansetron is taken once daily with or without food (usually 4 mg a day)

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.

How long do I need to take it?

How long you take ondansetron will depend on the reason you started it.

What happens if I stop it?

Ondansetron is not addictive and does not cause withdrawal symptoms.

Side effects

Ondansetron is generally well tolerated. It can cause constipation. If you have trouble swallowing ondansetron, it is also available as a ODT tablet that dissolves in your mouth.

It does not cause weight gain, fatigue, or sexual dysfunction.

Pregnancy: Ondansetron is commonly used during pregnancy (for nausea), but like most medication its safety is not fully evaluated during pregnancy or breastfeeding.

Risks

Rarely, ondansetron can cause cardiac arrhythmias by lengthening the QTc interval in the heartbeat.

Interactions

Ondansetron is metabolized in the liver (through CYP3A4, CYP1A2 and CYP2D6). Some medications may raise its levels by blocking those enzymes. You can check for drug interactions. 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

Ondansetron is available as a low-cost generic, but some insurers do not cover a 30 day supply because it is only FDA-approved as-needed for nausea. If you need to take it daily, you can find low cost out-of-pocket options at GoodRx.com.

Ondansetron

Brands	Zofran
Dose range	4 mg/day
Sizes	Tabs and orally disintegrating tabs: 4 mg
Release date	January 1991
FDA-approval	Prevention of chemotherapy-induced nausea and vomiting and postoperative nausea and vomiting

—Chris Aiken, MD, updated 7/23/2025