



# Pr **TRINTELLIX**<sup>®</sup> **GUIDE**

Patient information

  
**Trintellix**<sup>®</sup>  
vortioxetine

Your doctor has  
prescribed you  
TRINTELLIX for the  
treatment of major  
depressive disorder.

*Read this booklet to learn  
about depression and how  
TRINTELLIX can help treat it.*

## What is depression and what are the common symptoms?

There are different types of depression, but this booklet is focused on major depressive disorder, one type of depression. Major depressive disorder is a common and serious medical illness that can affect how you feel, the way you think and how you act. It can cause feelings of sadness and/or a loss of interest in activities you used to enjoy. However, **it is treatable**.



Depression can have many symptoms. They can be emotional, physical and cognitive. You may be suffering from depression if you are experiencing depressed mood or decreased interest or pleasure in activities and 4 or more of the symptoms listed below:

- Poor appetite, overeating or considerable weight changes
- Trouble sleeping or sleeping too much
- Moving or speaking slowly, so that other people have noticed or being so restless that you've been moving around a lot
- Feeling tired or having little energy
- Feeling bad about yourself – that you are a failure or having a lot of guilt
- Difficulty thinking, concentrating on things or making decisions
- Thoughts that you would be better off dead or of hurting yourself in some way

#### Depression is also associated with:

- Symptoms that are new or noticeably worse compared to what they were prior to the episode
- Symptoms that persist for most of the day, nearly every day for at least two consecutive weeks

## What causes depression?

There are a few things that are believed to cause depression or be risk factors for depression, including:

- An imbalance of certain chemicals in the brain
- A family history of depression
- A psychological or emotional pre-disposition
- A major life stress



## Who suffers from depression?

1.5 million Canadians (over 15 years of age) experienced a major depressive episode in the past year. Women are almost twice as likely to experience depression than men. So, if you're one of the people suffering, you are not alone.

No one is immune to depression and it can occur at any age.



**1.5 MILLION  
CANADIANS**



### DID YOU KNOW?

The Federal Government of Canada has made fighting depression and mental illnesses one of its key health priorities in recent years.

## How is depression diagnosed?

The important thing is to discuss your thoughts and feelings with a doctor or your loved ones. If left untreated, depression could get worse.

Generally, if your doctor suspects that you might be suffering from depression, they might ask you questions similar to these:

- *"In the last month, have you been bothered by little interest or pleasure in doing things?"*
- *"In the last month, have you been feeling down, depressed or hopeless?"*

Depending on your answers, your doctor may ask you more questions or perform some other assessments.

This will help your doctor determine a course of action and the most appropriate treatment plan for you.

## Common myths about depression

### ⊗ *You can just “snap out of it”.*

Depression is a real medical condition. One of the contributing factors to depression is an imbalance of chemicals that occur naturally in the brain.

### ⊗ *Depression isn't that common.*

About 1.5 million Canadians experience a depressive episode each year. You are not alone!

### ⊗ *Men don't suffer from depression.*

While depression is more common in women, men still suffer from it. In Canada, about 11% of men and 16% of women will suffer from major depression in their lives. Depressed men typically have a high rate of feeling irritable, angry and discouraged.

### ⊗ *Depression is a temporary change in mood, a character defect and a sign of weakness.*

Depression is not any of these. It is a real medical condition and it is treatable.

### ⊗ *I can hide my depression and no one will know.*

Depression reveals itself in many aspects of a person's life. Their feelings, moods, energy levels and ability to think can all be affected by depression.

### ⊗ *I just have a touch of sadness, I am not really depressed.*

It is common for people to underestimate what they are going through. Your doctor can help with some simple assessments and insights. It is always better to seek help from a professional than trying to tough it out on your own.

### ⊗ *My doctor just wants to give me pills. I can get better without medication.*

There are many different ways to treat depression. Some involve counselling and behaviour modification, which is commonly called “cognitive behavioural therapy” or CBT. CBT is given by a psychologist and helps people develop problem-solving skills and strategies to deal with their depression. It also helps people recognize distorted thinking and then helps them change behaviours. Other people may also require antidepressant medication. Working with your doctor and committing yourself to treatment can help you manage your depression. ➔



⊗ ***Depression only affects mood.***

Depression can be emotional, physical and cognitive. It can result in symptoms that include little interest or pleasure in doing things; feeling down, depressed or hopeless; trouble sleeping or sleeping too much; feeling tired or having little energy; poor appetite, overeating or considerable weight changes; feeling bad about yourself, like you are a failure or having a lot of guilt; trouble thinking, concentrating on things or making decisions; moving or speaking slowly, so that other people have noticed, or being so restless that you've been moving around a lot; and thoughts that you would be better off dead or of hurting yourself in some way. People with depression do not all experience the same symptoms, and the severity, frequency, and duration can vary. Talk to your doctor about all of your symptoms.

⊗ ***I am starting to feel better; I think I'll stop taking my medication.***

This is a common misconception. Your doctor is a trained medical professional. There was a reason your doctor prescribed medication for you. Continue to take your medication until your doctor tells you to stop.

## What is TRINTELLIX used for?

TRINTELLIX is used for treatment of depression in adults (18 years of age or older). TRINTELLIX is used to relieve the symptoms of depression which may include:

Feeling sad	Restless	Irritable
Change in appetite or weight	Feeling tired	
Having a hard time concentrating or sleeping		
Headaches	Unexplained aches and pains	



### How does TRINTELLIX work?

TRINTELLIX is thought to work by correcting the imbalance of serotonin in your brain. This may help ease emotional and physical symptoms of depression.

## How do I take TRINTELLIX?

It is very important that you take TRINTELLIX exactly as your doctor or pharmacist has instructed.



5 mg



10 mg



20 mg



Take one TRINTELLIX tablet with a glass of water, with or without food.



The usual adult dose is 10 mg once daily, for adults 18 to 64 years of age. For patients 65 years of age and over, the usual starting dose is 5 mg once daily. Depending on how you respond, your doctor may increase your maximum dose to 20 mg per day or decrease your minimum dose to 5 mg per day. Do not change the dose of your medicine without talking to your doctor first.



Do not suddenly stop taking TRINTELLIX without talking with your doctor. Continue to take TRINTELLIX for as long as your doctor recommends.



If you miss a dose of TRINTELLIX, you do not need to make up the missed dose. Skip the missed dose and continue with your next scheduled dose. Do not take two doses at the same time.

## What can you expect when taking TRINTELLIX (possible side effects)?

These are not all the possible side effects of TRINTELLIX. You should talk to your doctor if you experience any side effects, as your dose may need to be adjusted.

The most common side effects of TRINTELLIX are abdominal pain, bloating, common cold, Influenza (flu) symptoms, nausea, vomiting, decreased appetite, abnormal dreams and difficulty sleeping, dizziness, dry mouth, diarrhea, constipation, fatigue, sleepiness, sedated (feeling calm), body feels itchy, joint and muscle pain, increase in sweating, cough and urinary tract infection.

Other possible side effects of TRINTELLIX may include abnormal excessive sweating, dry eye, grinding teeth, headache, reddening of the skin, night sweats, weight gain, muscle twitching, yawning, dehydration, late menstrual cycle (period), sensitive breasts and sexual problems (decreases in sexual desire, performance and satisfaction, may also lead to further decreases, which may continue after the drug is stopped).



## How long do I need to take TRINTELLIX?

Everyone responds to medications differently, so it's important for you to work with your doctor and medical team and communicate how you're feeling while you're taking TRINTELLIX. Canadian treatment guidelines for depression recommend that people stay on antidepressants for 6 to 24 months. Continue to take TRINTELLIX for as long as your doctor recommends.

The medical team is there to help you. Ask how you can work with them. Little things, like keeping a daily routine, getting out of bed and getting showered to start the day are important. Keeping social engagements and a journal of how you are doing may also help you manage your progress. By working together, you can help to manage your depression.

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## Where do I store TRINTELLIX?

Keep TRINTELLIX out of the sight and reach of children.

Store at room temperature (15 to 30°C), protected from moisture.





## Additional safety information

### New or worsened emotional or behavioural problems

Treatment with TRINTELLIX or any type of antidepressant medication is most safe and effective when you and your doctor have good communication about how you are feeling. You may find it helpful to tell a relative or close friend that you are depressed. You might ask them to tell you if they think you are getting worse or if they are worried about changes in your behaviour.

You may feel worse instead of better when you first start taking drugs like TRINTELLIX or when changing your dose. Your doctor should closely monitor you. You may have:

- New or worsened feelings of restlessness, agitation, anger, aggression, nervousness, short temperament.

**If this happens, speak to your doctor.**

- Thoughts about suicide, hurting yourself or other people. Thoughts and actions about suicide can occur especially if you have had thoughts of hurting yourself in the past. Suicidal thoughts and actions can occur in any age group but may be more likely in patients 18 to 24 years old. **If this happens, seek immediate medical help.** Do NOT stop taking TRINTELLIX on your own.

### Ending treatment

Abruptly ending your treatment of TRINTELLIX may cause you to experience discontinuation symptoms. If your doctor recommends that you stop taking TRINTELLIX, they will gradually lower your dose. This may help manage any symptoms of discontinuation, such as:

- Dizziness, headache, runny nose
- Sweating or feeling like you are getting the flu
- Increase in dreams/nightmares, having difficulty sleeping or feeling tired
- Feeling angry, irritable, confused or having mood swings
- Muscles ache, feel tight or stiff

### Risk of breaking a bone

Taking TRINTELLIX may increase your risk of breaking a bone if you are elderly or have osteoporosis or have other major risk factors for breaking a bone. You should take extra care to avoid falls, especially if you get dizzy or have low blood pressure.

## Serotonin Syndrome or Neuroleptic Malignant Syndrome

TRINTELLIX may cause serotonin toxicity (also known as Serotonin Syndrome) or Neuroleptic Malignant Syndrome, rare but potentially life-threatening conditions. They can cause serious changes in how your brain, muscles and digestive system work. You may develop serotonin toxicity or Neuroleptic Malignant Syndrome if you take Trintellix with certain medications used to treat depression, migraine or other mental health problems such as schizophrenia.

Speak to your doctor immediately about ending your treatment with TRINTELLIX if you develop a combination of symptoms, such as:

- Fever, sweating, shivering, diarrhea, nausea, vomiting
- Muscle shakes, jerks, twitches or stiffness, changes in reflexes, loss of coordination
- Fast heartbeat, changes in blood pressure
- Confusion, agitation, restlessness, hallucinations, mood changes, unconsciousness and coma

## Effects on pregnancy and newborns

TRINTELLIX should not be used during pregnancy unless your doctor decides the benefit outweighs the risk to your unborn baby. If you are already taking TRINTELLIX and have just found out that you are pregnant, **you should talk to your doctor immediately**. If you take TRINTELLIX near the end of your pregnancy, you are at higher risk of heavy bleeding shortly after birth. Some newborn babies

experienced problems at birth when pregnant women took drugs similar to TRINTELLIX. You should also talk to your doctor if you are planning to become pregnant. It is very important that you **do NOT stop taking TRINTELLIX without first talking to your doctor**.

## Effects on sexual function

Taking medicines like TRINTELLIX may increase your risk of having sexual problems. This may continue after TRINTELLIX has been discontinued, including for months or years afterwards in some cases. Tell your healthcare professional if you experience symptoms such as a decrease in sexual desire, performance or satisfaction. Medicines like TRINTELLIX may affect sperm quality. Fertility in some men may be reduced while taking TRINTELLIX.

## Eye problems

TRINTELLIX can cause eye problems such as mydriasis, a condition where your pupils widen in an unusual way. This can cause a build-up of fluid and pressure in your eyes. Tell your doctor right away if you experience visions changes, eye pain, redness in or around the eye.

## Driving and using machines

Wait until you know how you feel after you have taken TRINTELLIX for the first time or when changing your dose. Do not drive or use heavy machines until you know how TRINTELLIX affects you.



## Make yourself a priority

Life is busy. It is easy to get distracted and make other things, people or thoughts your priority, especially if you are a parent or a caregiver. There will be time for all of these things later and you will be better equipped to deal with them if you begin the process of focusing on yourself and managing your depression. Enlist some family or outside help, if you can, to focus on yourself for a while.

You often hear the saying “put on your own mask first” on an airplane. The reason for this is you need to help yourself before you can really help others.



## Things to help you get back on track

- Take care of yourself by keeping a balanced lifestyle.
- Eat 3 healthy meals a day.
- Aim to do 30 minutes of moderate exercise at least 3 times a week.
- Try some meditation exercises or yoga. There are lots of great, quick apps that can help you with this.
- Plan to do one activity that gives you pleasure each day.
- Stay in contact with friends and family who can help support you.
- Avoid behaviours that can worsen depression, such as isolation, inactivity and alcohol or drug abuse.

### WHAT TO EXPECT ON YOUR TREATMENT JOURNEY

There is no one path to managing depression. Everyone is different. Being patient, and taking the medication your doctor has prescribed, will help. Your journey may take a while, and have some challenges, but sticking to the plan with your doctor through any short-term issues, will help you in the long term. Keeping a positive outlook and being determined are key.



Keep track of  
your treatment  
journey

Treatment  
with TRINTELLIX or  
any type of antidepressant  
medication is most safe and  
effective when you and your doctor  
have good communication about  
how you are feeling.

To help keep the lines of communication  
open, it's a good idea to track how  
you're feeling. Use this tracker to  
record how you are feeling every  
week or so. Bring this to your  
appointments with  
your doctor.

What were your symptoms of depression this week and how much did they affect you?

Write down the symptoms you experience in the spaces below and then rate on a scale of 1 to 10  
(1 = symptoms are not affecting you, 10 = you are very affected by your symptoms) by writing the appropriate number in the corresponding box.

Write your symptom(s) here (add any additional if new symptoms on other weeks)					
TODAY Rate your symptom(s) from 1 to 10					
WEEK 1 Rate your symptom(s) from 1 to 10					
WEEK 2 Rate your symptom(s) from 1 to 10					
WEEK 3 Rate your symptom(s) from 1 to 10					
WEEK 4 Rate your symptom(s) from 1 to 10					
WEEK 5 Rate your symptom(s) from 1 to 10					
WEEK 6 Rate your symptom(s) from 1 to 10					

How do you feel compared to previous weeks?

WEEK 1	WEEK 2	WEEK 3	WEEK 4	WEEK 5	WEEK 6

What pleasurable activities or moments have you had this week?

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# Important things to remember

- You are not alone. Depression is very common amongst Canadians. Depression is a real medical condition and it is treatable.
- Your doctor has prescribed TRINTELLIX for you. It is thought to work by correcting the imbalance of serotonin in your brain, which may help ease emotional and physical symptoms of depression.
- It's important for you to work with your doctor and medical team and communicate how you're feeling while you're taking TRINTELLIX. Make yourself a priority while you're working to manage your depression.

# Contact information and upcoming appointments

## Doctor/Healthcare Provider

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

## Psychologist/Therapist

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

## Nurse

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

## Pharmacist

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

## Social worker

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_



## Upcoming appointments

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_







# Looking for more information?

For more information about depression and its treatment, or to find help and resources, you can refer to the following websites:

MOOD DISORDERS SOCIETY OF CANADA

[mdsc.ca](https://mdsc.ca)

CENTRE FOR ADDICTION AND MENTAL HEALTH

[camh.ca](https://camh.ca)

CANADIAN MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION

[cmha.ca/find-info/mental-health](https://cmha.ca/find-info/mental-health)

[heretohelp.bc.ca/infosheet/depression](https://heretohelp.bc.ca/infosheet/depression)

MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION OF CANADA

[mentalhealthcommission.ca](https://mentalhealthcommission.ca)

GOVERNMENT OF QUEBEC

[quebec.ca/en/health/health-issues/  
mental-health-mental-illness/depression](https://quebec.ca/en/health/health-issues/mental-health-mental-illness/depression)

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