

GET THE FACTS ABOUT TRAMADOL



WHAT IS TRAMADOL?

Tramadol is a prescription medicine used to treat immediate and long-term pain of moderate to moderately severe intensity. It is a **synthetic** (man-made) **opioid**, which has actions similar to those of morphine.

Tramadol should be used only when it is prescribed by a medical doctor. Tramadol is legal in Nigeria, but some people use it without doctors' instruction and some others use it for non-medical purposes. Tramadol is currently the most common non-medically used opioid in Nigeria.

In Nigeria, tramadol is available in tablet, capsule or liquid form. It is mostly taken orally, but sometimes injected. **Internationally, and in Nigeria, the common medical dosage of tramadol is 50 mg and 100 mg. When medically prescribed, tramadol can be taken every 4 hours, with a medically recommended dose of up to a maximum of 400 mg per day.**

Tramadol when used for non-medical purpose or without a doctor's prescription, commonly exceeds the medically recommended dose. In Nigeria, tramadol dosage of 200mg, 225mg, 300mg, 400mg, 500mg and greater can be found in the illegal market.

EFFECTS OF TRAMADOL

WHEN TAKEN ORALLY THE EFFECT WILL BE FELT AFTER 30-60 MINUTES. PAIN RELIEF WEARS OFF AFTER 4 – 6 HOURS.

Some physical side-effects

- » nausea
- » vomiting
- » dizziness
- » sweating
- » headaches
- » itchiness
- » loss of appetite
- » constipation

Some physical side-effects in higher doses (more than recommended daily dose and when commonly mixed with other drugs)

- » respiratory depression (slow breathing)
- » abnormally low blood pressure
- » slow heart rate
- » weak muscles
- » death (rare, usually the result of combination with other drugs)
- » convulsions—seizures (mainly associated with doses exceeding the maximum recommended dose of 400mg per day) —recurrent seizures is possible

Some psychological/emotional/behavioural side-effects

- » feelings of 'high', intense happiness, excitement
- » dependency
- » restlessness, agitation, mood change
- » alter feeling of fear and pain
- » increased energy and inability to sleep
- » hallucinations
- » decreased alertness and feel relaxed
- » associated to cases of sexual assaults

DO PEOPLE BECOME DEPENDENT ON TRAMADOL?

YES. Tramadol dependence may occur when used daily for more than a few weeks/months. In many cases of tramadol dependence, a person has a history of using other drugs such as alcohol, other painkillers, sedatives or cough mixtures. Even people who follow their doctor's directions can become dependent on tramadol.

CAN PEOPLE EXPERIENCE WITHDRAWAL FROM TRAMADOL USE?

YES. As with other opioid withdrawal symptoms can include restlessness, agitation, anxiety, sweating, insomnia, muscle spasm, tremor, burning or itching of skin, nausea, strong desire to use the drug, irritability, depression, flu-like symptoms, coughing and sneezing, chills, nervousness or panic. The withdrawal symptoms may last for a few days or weeks depending upon duration of use.

CAN DEPENDENCE ON TRAMADOL USE BE TREATED?

YES. In-patient or out-patient treatment programs including detoxification may be recommended. Doctors will likely prescribe medications that help control and ease the symptoms associated with tramadol withdrawal. Outpatient treatment programs include doctor-supervised withdrawal from the drug, counselling, mutual help and support groups, and supportive family and friends.

SOME COMMON NAMES FOR TRAMADOL IN NIGERIA INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

225 200 RED BOY T.M. TRAMOL TRA TH TR GREEN (GREEN CAPSULE) TOMATOE (RED TABLET)
TRAM ULTRAS TRAMMIES BLUETOOTH TRAFFICKING DEVICE PILLS TRACKERCHILL

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