Antidepressants Are

Apparently only human beings suffer from being depressed. For a number of years, doctors have been prescribing antidepressant medications to help people who have emotional problems that make them suffer from symptoms like depression and sadness. Each of these medications has a generic name and one or more "brand" names. Some of the medicines often used to relieve such symptoms are the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brand Name</th>
<th>Generic Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adapin</td>
<td>doxepin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asendin</td>
<td>amoxapine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aventyl</td>
<td>nortriptyline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desyrel</td>
<td>trazodone</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elavil</td>
<td>amitriptyline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ludiomil</td>
<td>maprotiline hydrochloride</td>
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<tr>
<td>Norpramin</td>
<td>desipramine</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sinequan</td>
<td>doxepin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tofranil</td>
<td>imipramine</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vivactil</td>
<td>proteiptyline</td>
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</tbody>
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Symptoms of Depression

When your doctor suggests that you taken an antidepressant medication, he or she believes that it will take away some or all of the symptoms connected with your emotional problem. These symptoms are usually one or more of the following:

- feeling sad
- feeling worthless
- feeling ambivalent
- feeling suicidal
- being bothered with anxious feelings
- being bothered by feeling guilty
- having unrealistic self-accusatory ideas
- eating more or less than usual
- having different sleep patterns than usual
- finding life uninteresting
- being less physically active than usual
- being less mentally alert than usual

Other symptoms can be treated with antidepressants, also.

Possible Side Effects

Antidepressant medications, like other medications, sometimes have "side" effects. That is, you might take an antidepressant medication to relieve depression and sadness, but find that you have a new problem from taking the medicine. Side effects can't be predicted in advance; many people have none or few, some have side effects that no one else has. NO ONE HAS ALL OF THE POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS.

When side effects do happen, they often vary with the amount of medication you take, how long you take it, and your physical and mental condition. Effects can vary with any...
other medication you might be taking. Remember that medicines, used as prescribed, are almost always safe and helpful. If you should start taking an antidepressant medication and have side effects, your doctor can help make the side effects go away or become less troublesome.

Antidepressant medications have a number of common side effects:
- blurred vision
- constipation
- rapid pulse
- problems in urinating
- dizziness
- dry mouth
- headache
- increased appetite
- nausea
- tiredness or weakness

Sometimes, but not often, people notice one or more of the following side effects when they begin taking antidepressant medication:
- eye pain
- daytime drowsiness
- seeing, hearing, or feeling things that aren't there
- shakiness
- unusually slow pulse
- diarrhea
- excessive sweating
- heartburn
- increased sensitivity to sunlight
- sleeping difficulty
- vomiting

REMEMBER: NO ONE EXPERIENCES ALL OF THE SIDE EFFECTS!

Remember that NO ONE has all of the side effects that might happen from antidepressants. VERY RARELY, patients have noticed one or more of these side effects:
- seizures
- skin rash and itching
- sore throat
- yellowing of skin, eyes

CAUTION

Be aware that you must be cautious about some things while you are taking antidepressant medication:

1. You should not use alcohol while you are taking an antidepressant medication.

2. Street drugs or other medicines can cause a reaction if they are used while you are taking an antidepressant medicine.

3. Driving any vehicles or operating machinery must be done with CAUTION, particularly when you are just beginning to take an antidepressant.

4. Like any other prescribed medicine, antidepressant medication must be taken EXACTLY AS PRESCRIBED. It is possible to become addicted to, or dependent on, medicine, especially if it is taken longer than prescribed, or in larger doses than prescribed.

Continued
Deciding

When you are deciding whether to take treatment including an antidepressant, consider all of these things first:

1. What does your doctor expect the antidepressant medication to do for you? How does it fit with the rest of your treatment?
2. What other ways are there for you to get better? Other than antidepressants, ways of treating depression are not well understood. Some people do work through emotional problems like this in therapy, or through support groups. Ask your doctor and therapist.
3. Think about the symptoms that might go away or bother you less if you take the prescribed medication. How much difference would that make to you?
4. What are the possible side effects you might feel? How much difference would that make to you?
5. Compare the advantages and disadvantages of taking the prescribed medicine, and not taking it.

Before You Begin

If you decide that antidepressant medication is useful in your treatment, do these things FIRST:

1. Tell your doctor any physical condition you have, or have been treated for in the past. Describe any liver disease, glaucoma, kidney disease, or chronic lung disease, and any other physical condition you remember.
2. Tell your doctor the names or any medications you have taken, or have had prescribed for you.
3. If you are pregnant or think you might be pregnant, tell your doctor BEFORE you take medication.

Before You Stop

If you start to take antidepressant medications and then decide to stop, BE SURE TO TALK WITH YOUR DOCTOR FIRST.

If you stop taking medication suddenly, you could start suffering from the same symptoms again, or could have other unpleasant side effects. Your doctor can recommend the best way to stop taking a medication.

Agreeing To Treatment

When you have finished reading the medication information in this paper, and have talked with your doctor, you will decide whether or not to take antidepressant medication as prescribed by your doctor. The front sheet of this document is an "informed consent" form that gives you the right to choose the treatment suggested for you, or to refuse. Sign your name in the block you choose, and give the form to your therapist. Keep this information sheet for reference.