



VIAGRA

VIAGRA (sildenafil) is the first **oral** treatment for erectile dysfunction (impotence) to be licenced in the UK. This fact sheet provides basic information on VIAGRA; for more detailed information you should consult your doctor.

What is VIAGRA?

VIAGRA belongs to a group of medicines called phosphodiesterase type 5 inhibitors. It is a blue, diamond shaped, oral tablet prescribed to treat men suffering from clinical erectile dysfunction. **It is not an aphrodisiac and does not increase libido.** VIAGRA works in a natural way, so sexual stimulation will be required.

How does VIAGRA work?

VIAGRA works by helping to relax the blood vessels in the penis, allowing blood to flow into the penis causing an erection. However, VIAGRA works naturally and will only help a man to get an erection if he is sexually stimulated. It should not be taken by men who do not have erectile dysfunction.

How do you take VIAGRA?

VIAGRA is available in three strengths - 25mg, 50mg and 100mg. The initial dose is selected by the doctor, based on need. VIAGRA should be swallowed whole with some water about an hour before anticipated sexual activity. The amount of time it takes to work varies from person to person, but VIAGRA works quickly, on average 25 minutes, but may be as soon as 12 minutes. Within a 4 to 6 hour period after taking the tablet an erection should occur in response to sexual stimulation. A man may find that VIAGRA takes longer to work if taken with a heavy meal.

Alcohol consumption can temporarily interfere with the erection process. To get the maximum benefit from the medication it is advisable not to drink large amounts of alcohol before taking VIAGRA, as alcohol can impair sexual activity.

VIAGRA should not be used more than once a day. Do not take VIAGRA with other medicines unless your doctor tells you that you can.

What side effects may be associated with VIAGRA?

The manufacturers have tested the drug on nearly 13,000 men during 13 completed and ongoing clinical trials. When taken at the recommended doses some side effects have been reported although they were generally mild to moderate and brief in length. The most common side effects are headache and facial flushing. Less commonly reported are indigestion, dizziness, stuffy nose and effects on vision (predominantly a blue colour tinge to vision and increased brightness of light or blurred vision).

Who cannot take VIAGRA?

Patients who are taking any medicines containing nitrates. These medicines are commonly prescribed for relief of angina pectoris "chest pain". In combination with VIAGRA they could seriously lower blood pressure. Patients should inform their Doctor if they are taking any of these medicines or ask if they are not certain.

**Who cannot take VIAGRA?
(Continued)**

Patients with the following:

Known hypersensitivity to any component of the drug VIAGRA.

Severe heart or liver problem.

Recent stroke, heart attack, or low blood pressure, or in men for whom sexual activity is inadvisable.

Certain rare inherited eye diseases (such as retinitis pigmentosa).

VIAGRA should not be taken in combination with other erectile dysfunction treatments.

Patients should not take VIAGRA (50mg Or 100mg) within 4 hours of taking an alpha blocker such as Flomax.

What conditions may prevent a man using VIAGRA?

An abnormally formed penis.

Diseases that might result in prolonged erection e.g. sickle cell anaemia (an abnormality of red blood cells), multiple myeloma (cancer of bone marrow) or leukemia (cancer of blood cells).

Bleeding disorders (such as haemophilia) or peptic ulceration (stomach ulcer).

Can women take VIAGRA?

VIAGRA should not be taken by women. It is not licensed for use in women and its safety in women has not been tested.

What happens if I increase the dose?

An increase in dose should always occur under close medical supervision. Clinical trials have shown that increasing the drug beyond the maximum recommended dose of 100mg simply increases the side effects and not the efficacy.

If you feel you need a higher dose talk to your doctor. Men with diabetes have been shown to need to take 100mg preferentially.

Can I drive while taking VIAGRA?

VIAGRA can cause dizziness and effects on vision. Patients should be aware of how they react to the drug before they drive or operate machinery.

Will it work for everyone?

If Viagra does not help you to get an erection, or your erection does not last long enough for you to complete your chosen sexual activity you should tell your doctor who will be able to help. **It may be appropriate for you to try the higher dose of Viagra.** However it can take several attempts to get back into practice again. There are other effective treatment options available and information can be obtained from your doctor or the Sexual Dysfunction Association.

An invitation.....

.... to enrol as a friend of the Sexual Dysfunction Association. For a small annual subscription, you will receive copies of *One in Ten*, the Association's newsletter and you will be contributing to an Association which helps overcome the problems of male and female sexual dysfunction. If you are interested, please telephone or write for an application form.

Telephone Helpline 0870 7743571