FAIRVIEW PHARMACY — EST. 1978

Taking duloxetine safely

duloxetine · also sold as Cymbalta · once daily capsule

3 MISTAKES TO AVOID

1. **Opening or chewing the capsule**
   Swallow it whole. The coating protects the medicine from stomach acid.
2. **Stopping suddenly, or mixing medicines**
   Taper off with your doctor. Never combine with an MAO inhibitor.
3. **Heavy drinking, or ignoring liver signs**
   Not meant for substantial alcohol use or liver disease.

How to take it

- **Swallow the capsule whole,** once a day, with or without food.
- **Never open, chew, or crush it.** That can damage the coating, so stomach acid may break the medicine down.

Stopping and mixing (mistake #2)

- **Never stop suddenly.** Taper off with your doctor to avoid dizziness, headache, nausea, or trouble sleeping.
- **MAO inhibitors:** never combine. Wait **14 days** after an MAOI before starting duloxetine, and **5 days** after duloxetine before an MAOI.
- Triptans, tramadol, St. John's wort, blood thinners, and NSAIDs also need special attention.

Liver and alcohol (mistake #3)

- Not meant for people with substantial alcohol use or liver disease; the combination can injure your liver.
- Stand up slowly, especially early in treatment or after a dose change, to avoid falls.

IMPORTANT
Duloxetine carries a boxed warning: in children, teens and young adults, antidepressants can raise the risk of suicidal thoughts and actions.

Call your doctor right away if you notice

- New or worse depression, anxiety, agitation, or thoughts of suicide, especially in the first few months or after a dose change.
- Yellow skin or eyes, dark urine, or stomach pain.
- Fever with confusion, muscle stiffness, or a racing heartbeat (serotonin syndrome), especially with other serotonin medicines.
- Headache, confusion, weakness, or unsteadiness (possible low sodium), especially in older adults.

EMERGENCY: CALL 911
Blisters, a peeling rash, mouth sores, or trouble breathing.

Thoughts of suicide? Call or text **988** (Suicide & Crisis Lifeline), any time.

Questions? Ask Dr. Mike at fairviewpharm.com/medications

Leave a message: 601-640-4671 · 500 Katie Ave, Hattiesburg, MS

Medically reviewed by Dr. Mike Acheampong, Pharmacist, Fairview Pharmacy · October 2026

This handout is for education only and is not medical advice. Talk with your doctor or pharmacist about your medicines.
Source: FDA prescribing information for duloxetine delayed-release capsules (Lupin, rev. 10/2025). CYMBALTA is a trademark of its owner.

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