FAIRVIEW PHARMACY — EST. 1978

Taking escitalopram safely

escitalopram · also sold as Lexapro · once daily, 10-20 mg

3 MISTAKES TO AVOID

1 Taking it with the wrong medicine

Never with an MAO inhibitor or pimozide. These raise serotonin to a dangerous level.

2 Stopping it on your own, all at once

Taper off with your doctor to avoid dizziness and irritability.

3 Missing the warning signs

Serotonin syndrome and low sodium both need prompt medical attention.

How to take it

- **Once a day,** morning or evening, with or without food.
- **Usual dose:** 10 mg a day. Your prescriber may raise it to **20 mg** if you need more benefit.
- **Never stop suddenly.** Taper off with your doctor to avoid dizziness, irritability, or trouble sleeping.

Medicines that cannot mix (mistake #1)

- **MAO inhibitors:** never combine. Wait **14 days** either way before switching.
- **Pimozide:** never combine. Don't start escitalopram if you're on linezolid or IV methylene blue.
- Also tell your pharmacist about other antidepressants, tramadol, St. John's wort, NSAIDs, and blood thinners.

Good to know

- Don't drink alcohol while you take it. Don't drive or do risky tasks until you know how it affects you.

IMPORTANT

Escitalopram 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.
- Fever, confusion, agitation, muscle stiffness, or a fast heartbeat (possible serotonin syndrome).
- A seizure, or a big jump in energy, racing thoughts, or reckless behavior.
- Headache, confusion, weakness, or unsteadiness (possible low sodium), especially in older adults.

EMERGENCY: CALL 911

Rash, hives, swelling of the face, lips, tongue or throat, 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.
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