

BuSpar (Buspirone)

Brand and Generic Names

- Brand name = BuSpar®
- Tablets: 5 mg, 10 mg, 15mg, 30 mg
- Generic name = Buspirone

What is BuSpar® and what does it treat?

Buspirone is not chemically or pharmacologically related to other anti-anxiety medication such as benzodiazepines, barbiturates, or other sedative/anxiolytic drug. The exact mechanism of buspirone is unknown, however it seems to affect key receptors (serotonin and dopamine) in certain parts of the brain that are involved in mood and anxiety.

Buspirone is indicated for the management of fear, tension and anxiety associated with anxiety disorders. Buspirone has been FDA approved for the treatment of anxiety and has been proven effective in patients with generalized anxiety of a limited or moderate degree. It may not be as effective in patients with severe anxiety, panic disorders, or obsessive-compulsive disorders.

Patients with generalized anxiety disorder (GAD) have the following symptoms at the same time: excessive and difficult to control anxiety or worrying, feeling restless or "on edge", difficulty concentrating, irritability, muscle tension, tiring easily, and difficulty falling and/or staying asleep.

What is the most important information I should know about BuSpar®?

1. It may take several weeks before you start to feel better. Do not stop taking this medication without talking to your doctor first.
2. Although it is uncommon, you may experience some dizziness or drowsiness at the start of your treatment. If you do experience these symptoms, use caution when operating machinery, driving, or performing other hazardous activities.
3. Alcohol may increase any drowsiness or dizziness when taken with buspirone. You should use avoid the use of alcohol while taking buspirone.

Are there specific concerns about BuSpar® and pregnancy?

Buspirone is in the FDA Pregnancy category B. This means that adequate studies of buspirone in pregnant women have not been conducted; however studies in animals show no important effects on the fetus. If the physician feels that it is clearly necessary, then buspirone can be used. Buspirone passes into breast milk and may affect a nursing infant. Do not take this medication before talking to your doctor if you are breast-feeding a baby.

What should I discuss with my healthcare provider before taking BuSpar®?

1. Symptoms that are most bothersome to you about your condition
2. Medications you have taken in the past to treat GAD
3. All other medications you are currently taking and any medication allergies you have
4. Any medication side effects that you may have experienced in the past, or are currently experiencing
5. Any medical problems you have
6. If you have any of the following listed conditions you may not be able to take buspirone, you may require a dose adjustment or you may require special monitoring while taking buspirone. Tell your doctor if you:
 - Have had an allergic reaction to buspirone in the past;
 - Are taking a monoamine oxidase inhibitor such as phenelzine (Nardil), isocarboxazid (Marplan), or tranylcypromine (Parnate) or have taken one within the last 14 days;
 - Have kidney disease
 - Have liver disease
 - Have a history of alcohol or drug addiction
 - Are pregnant or breast feeding
7. Buspirone has not been approved for use by children under the age of 18.

How should I take BuSpar®?

1. Take buspirone exactly as directed by your doctor. If you do not understand these instructions or have questions, visit your pharmacist, nurse or doctor for further explanations. Do not take more than your doctor has prescribed for you.
2. You may take this medication with or without food, but take it the same way each time.
3. Store buspirone at room temperature away from moisture and heat. Keep all medicine out of reach of children and never share your medication with anyone.

What happens if I miss a dose of BuSpar®?

If you miss a dose of buspirone take it as soon as you remember. However, if it is almost time for your next dose, skip the missed dose and only take your next regularly scheduled dose. **DO NOT** take a double dose of this medication.

What should I avoid while taking BuSpar®?

1. Although it is uncommon, you may experience some dizziness or drowsiness at the start of your treatment. If you do experience these symptoms, use caution when operating machinery, driving, or performing other hazardous activities.
2. Alcohol may increase any drowsiness or dizziness when taken with buspirone. You should avoid the use of alcohol.
3. Do not take any prescription or over the counter medications without talking to your doctor first. Make sure to notify your doctor of all current medications you are taking. Buspirone may increase the effects of other drugs that cause drowsiness, such as antidepressants, antihistamines, sedatives, pain relievers, muscle relaxants, or other anxiety medications.
4. Grapefruit and grapefruit juice may interact with buspirone. Do not increase or decrease the amount of grapefruit in your diet without consulting your doctor. This interaction can lead to adverse events.

What happens if I overdose with BuSpar®?

Symptoms of an overdose of buspirone are drowsiness, very deep sleep, nausea, vomiting, and unusually small pupils. If you overdose with this medication you should seek emergency medical treatment. Call your doctor or emergency medical service (911).

What are the possible side effects of BuSpar®?

Common side effects include: drowsiness, fatigue, dry mouth, or an increase in nightmares or dreams. Continue to take buspirone and talk to your doctor if you experience these adverse events.

Rare, but serious side effects of buspirone include: an allergic reaction (difficulty breathing; hives; swelling of your lips, tongue or face); chest pain or an irregular heartbeat; headache, dizziness, lightheadedness, slurred speech, confusion or blurred vision; numbness or tingling in your hands, feet, arms, or legs; depression; or uncontrollable movements of your arms, legs, tongue, or lips.

When switching from a benzodiazepine to buspirone, symptoms of withdrawal from the benzodiazepine may occur. These symptoms include irritability, agitation, anxiety, insomnia, tremor or even seizures.

You may experience other side effects that are not listed here. If this occurs be sure to talk to your doctor about any symptoms that seem unusual or that are especially bothersome.

Are there any risks for taking BuSpar® for long periods of time?

There are no known risks for taking buspirone for long periods of time.

What other drugs may interact with BuSpar®?

1. If you have taken a monoamine oxidase inhibitor such as phenelzine (Nardil), isocarboxazid (Marplan), Selegiline (Eldepryl), or tranylcypromine (Parnate) within the last two weeks, do NOT take buspirone. The use of buspirone with these agents can cause a SEVERE increase in blood pressure.
2. If you are taking any of the following medications you may require a dose adjustment or you may require special monitoring while taking buspirone. Tell your doctor if you are taking any of the following medications:
 - Nefazodone (Serzone);
 - Itraconazole (Sporanox);
 - Erythromycin (E-Mycin, E.E.S., Ery-Tab, Eryc, others);
 - Selegiline (eldepryl);
 - Diltiazem (Cardizem, Dilacor, Tiazac);
 - Verapamil (Calan, Covera-HS, Isoptin, Verelan);
 - Rifampin (Rifadin, Rimactane, Rifampicin, others); or
 - Cimetidine (Tagamet)
3. Do not take any prescription, over the counter medications, vitamins or herbal products without talking to your doctor first. Make sure to notify your doctor of all current medications you are taking. Buspirone may increase the effects of other drugs that cause drowsiness, such as antidepressants, antihistamines, sedatives, pain relievers, muscle relaxants, or other anxiety medications.
4. Buspirone may interact with other medications that are not listed here. Be sure that you know and talk to your doctor or pharmacist about all of your medications so that you can prevent any drug-drug interactions from occurring.

How long does it take for BuSpar® to work?

1. It may take several weeks of daily use of buspirone before you start to feel better. Do not stop taking this medication without talking to your doctor first. You may need to slowly decrease the dose before stopping completely.

*Snehal Patel, PharmD Candidate
(August 2006)*



NAMI wishes to thank the [College of Psychiatric and Neurological Pharmacists](#) for producing this fact sheet.

For further information please contact the pharmaceutical company listed below.

Bristol-Myers Squibb	P.O. Box 4500 Princeton, NJ 08543-4500	800-321-1335	www.bms.com
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Free or low-cost medications provided by pharmaceutical companies

Some pharmaceutical companies offer medication assistance programs to low-income individuals and families. These programs typically require a doctor's consent and proof of financial status. They may also require that you have either no health insurance, or no prescription drug benefit through your health insurance. Please contact the pharmaceutical company directly for specific eligibility requirements and application information.

BuSpar Rx Assistance Program: 800-444-4106