
VARDENAFIL (Levitra) Fact Sheet [G]

Bottom Line:

Vardenafil doesn't offer any benefits compared to sildenafil, which has more data in the psychiatric setting and more clinical experience.

FDA Indications:

Erectile dysfunction.

Dosage Forms:

- **Tablets (Levitra, [G]):** 2.5 mg, 5 mg, 10 mg, 20 mg.
- **Orally disintegrating tablets (Staxyn, [G]):** 10 mg.

Dosage Guidance:

- Start 10 mg ×1 one hour prior to sexual activity (5 mg if >65 years old). Max 20 mg/dose and one dose/day.
- Orally disintegrating tablets (Staxyn): Start 10 mg ×1 one hour prior to sexual activity. Max 10 mg/day.
- Taking with a high-fat meal may decrease serum vardenafil levels by as much as 50%.

Monitoring: No routine monitoring recommended unless clinical picture warrants.

Cost: \$

Side Effects:

- Most common: Flushing, headache, nasal congestion, heartburn.
- Serious but rare: May cause dose-related impairment of color discrimination. Sudden decrease or loss of hearing has been reported rarely; hearing changes may be accompanied by tinnitus and dizziness. Decreases in blood pressure may occur due to vasodilator effects; concurrent use with alpha-adrenergic antagonists or substantial alcohol consumption may cause symptomatic hypotension. Avoid use with nitrates (see below). Painful erection greater than six hours in duration (priapism) may occur rarely.

Mechanism, Pharmacokinetics, and Drug Interactions:

- Phosphodiesterase type 5 (PDE-5) inhibitor.
- Metabolized primarily through CYP3A4 and to a lesser extent 2C9; t_{1/2}: 4–5 hours.
- Avoid concomitant use with nitrates in any form (eg, nitroglycerin, isosorbide dinitrate, amyl nitrite “poppers”). Use with caution in patients taking alpha blockers; may cause symptomatic hypotension (use 5 mg dose). Use with caution in patients taking strong CYP3A4 inhibitors, which may increase or extend effects of vardenafil (maximum of 2.5 mg/day).

Clinical Pearl:

Usual onset of effect of vardenafil is within one hour of a dose; effects usually last two hours.

Fun Fact:

Staxyn, the orally disintegrating tablet form of vardenafil, is peppermint flavored.