

## Drug information sheet: Duloxetine (Cymbalta®)

### What type of drug is it?

Duloxetine is a drug that is used to treat certain types of Neuropathic (nerve) pain, depression, stress incontinence in women and certain types of anxiety. You are receiving this medication to treat your pain.

### Is it safe?

Duloxetine has been used successfully by many patients for the treatment of neuropathic (nerve) pain. It can affect other medications such as tramadol, antidepressants, warfarin and some herbal products. In order for it to be used safely it is important that you have told your pain specialist/GP about any other medicines, allergies and medical problems that you are suffering from before starting this medicine.

### Are there any side effects?

As with all medications Duloxetine can cause side effects but not everyone is affected by them. The most common side effect is drowsiness so you must not drive or operate machinery if affected. Other side effects include nausea, diarrhoea, constipation, and dry mouth. Most of these side effects will improve after several days. The combination of Duloxetine with alcohol can cause significant drowsiness so we would advise you not to drink when you first take this medication. Once you are on a stable dose you may drink alcohol if the drowsiness has stopped.

There are some simple ways to help manage some of the side effects.

- Dry mouth – Drink more non-alcoholic drinks, chewing gum also increases saliva in the mouth.
- Constipation – Eat plenty of fibre containing foods, fruit and vegetables and keep hydrated.

### How should I take it?

Duloxetine does not work straight away like an ordinary pain killer. The medication needs to be taken regularly for a few weeks before a benefit is noticed. The dose will usually start at 30mg once a day. This may be increased to 60mg after 2 weeks.

Increasing or decreasing the dose must be done according to the prescription provided by your GP who will also monitor you for pain relief and side effects, as this will decide your maximum dose.

If you do not experience pain relief after 2 months the medication is likely to be stopped.

### Who do I contact with queries or concerns?

The information in this leaflet is to guide your use of Duloxetine safely. Further information is available inside the medication package.

If you have any further questions or concerns about taking this medicine, please contact your prescribing doctor or dispensing pharmacist.