

About tadalafil-Brand names: Cialis, Adcirca

Tadalafil is a medicine used to treat erection problems ([erectile dysfunction](#)) and symptoms of an enlarged prostate ([benign prostate enlargement](#)).

It's also sometimes used to treat [pulmonary hypertension](#) (high blood pressure in the blood vessels that supply the lungs).

If you have erection problems, tadalafil works by temporarily increasing blood flow to the penis when you get sexually excited.

If you have symptoms of an enlarged prostate gland, such as difficulty peeing or needing to pee urgently, tadalafil works by relaxing the muscles in the prostate and bladder.

In pulmonary hypertension it works by relaxing blood vessels in the chest.

Tadalafil is available on prescription only. It comes as tablets.

You can only get it on prescription for erectile dysfunction if you have a specific condition such as multiple sclerosis or a spinal cord injury.

Tadalafil is not usually used to treat benign prostate enlargement because there is not enough evidence about how well it works.

If you do not meet the NHS criteria for tadalafil, you may get a private prescription from a doctor. This means you'll need to pay the full cost of the medicine.

Key facts

- It usually takes 30 to 60 minutes for tadalafil to work for erectile dysfunction. You can take it at least 30 minutes before you want to have sex.
- Taking tadalafil alone is not enough to cause an erection. You need to be sexually aroused for it to work.
- The most common side effects are headaches, feeling sick, indigestion and facial flushes.
- It can be dangerous to take tadalafil if you also take medicines called nitrates (often prescribed for chest pain). This combination can cause dangerously low blood pressure. If you're not sure if you're taking a nitrate, ask your doctor or pharmacist.
- Do not drink grapefruit juice if you're taking tadalafil for pulmonary hypertension. It affects the way the medicine works.

Who can and cannot take tadalafil-Brand names: Cialis, Adcirca

Who can take tadalafil

Most men aged 18 and over can take tadalafil for erectile dysfunction.

Most adults aged 18 and over can take it for pulmonary hypertension.

Who may not be able to take tadalafil

Tadalafil is not suitable for some people. To make sure it's safe for you, tell your doctor if you:

- have ever had an allergic reaction to tadalafil or any other medicine
- are taking medicines called nitrates for chest pain (angina)
- have a serious heart and liver problem
- have recently had a [stroke](#) or a [heart attack](#)
- have [low blood pressure](#) (hypotension) or uncontrolled [high blood pressure](#) (hypertension)
- have ever lost your vision due to reduced blood flow to the eye
- have [sickle cell anaemia](#) (an abnormality of red blood cells)
- have [leukaemia](#) (cancer of blood cells)
- have [multiple myeloma](#) (cancer of bone marrow)
- have [Peyronie's disease \(curved penis\)](#) or a similar problem with your penis
- have a liver or kidney condition
- have a heart condition – your doctor will advise you whether your heart can take the additional strain of having sex

How and when to take tadalafil-Brand names: Cialis, Adcirca

It's important to take this medicine as advised by a doctor or pharmacist.

If you have a private prescription for tadalafil, read the information that comes with your medicine carefully. The strength and dosage instructions can vary.

Dosage and strength

Tadalafil comes as 2.5mg, 5mg, 10mg and 20mg tablets.

Dose for erectile dysfunction

The usual dose of tadalafil for erectile dysfunction is 10mg when you need it. Do not take more than 1 tablet a day.

Your doctor may increase or decrease your dose, depending on how well it works and how often you take it.

The effects may last longer than 24 hours, so you're not recommended to take the 10mg or 20mg tablets every day.

For the tablet to work properly, you'll need to be sexually excited.

Dose for benign prostate enlargement

Tadalafil for an enlarged prostate comes as 2.5mg or 5mg tablets. The usual dose is 5mg, taken once a day.

If you're being treated for both benign prostate enlargement and erectile dysfunction, the dose is 5mg.

Dose for pulmonary hypertension

Tadalafil for pulmonary hypertension comes as 20mg tablets.

The usual dose is 40mg – two 20mg tablets, taken once a day.

If you have kidney or liver problems your doctor might decrease the starting dose to 10mg or 20mg.

How to take it

Swallow your tablets whole with a drink of water or juice (but not grapefruit juice).

For erectile dysfunction, take 1 tablet at least 30 minutes before you want to have sex.

If you are taking tadalafil for prostate enlargement, you can take your tablet in the morning or evening, but it's best to take it at the same time each day.

Tadalafil tablets for pulmonary hypertension are large and may be difficult to swallow.

If you forget to take it

If you have:

- **benign prostate enlargement** – take it as soon as you remember and then continue as usual
- **pulmonary hypertension** – take it within 8 hours if you can. If you remember after 8 hours, skip the missed dose and take the next dose at the usual time

Never take 2 doses at the same time. Never take an extra dose to make up for a forgotten one.

If you often forget doses, it may help to set an alarm to remind you. You could also ask a pharmacist for advice on other ways to help you remember to take your medicine.

If you take too much

Taking too much tadalafil can cause side effects, including:

- headache
- dizziness
- indigestion
- stuffy nose
- changes to your vision (such as blurred vision)

Urgent advice:

Contact 111 for advice now if:

- you take more than your prescribed dose of tadalafil

Go to 111.nhs.uk or call [111](https://111.nhs.uk)

Information:

If you need to go to [A&E](#), do not drive. Ask someone to drive you or call 999 and ask for an ambulance.

Bring the tadalafil packet or leaflet inside it, any remaining medicine, and any other medicines you take.

Side effects of tadalafil-Brand names: Cialis, Adcirca

Like all medicines, tadalafil can cause side effects in some people, but many people have no side effects or only minor ones.

Common side effects

Common side effects of tadalafil happen in more than 1 in 100 people.

If you're taking it for erection problems you're unlikely to get side effects as you're only taking it for a short time.

If you're taking tadalafil for pulmonary hypertension and get these side effects, there are things you can do to help cope with them:

Headaches

Feeling sick (nausea)

Facial flushing and hot flushes

Indigestion

Stuffy nose

Muscle aches

Side effects will usually go away when you stop taking the tablets. Talk to a doctor or pharmacist if the advice on how to cope does not help and a side effect is still bothering you or does not go away.

Serious side effects

Serious side effects are rare and happen in less than 1 in 1,000 people.

Urgent advice:Go to A&E straight away if:

- you have sudden loss of vision or sudden problems with your hearing – stop taking tadalafil if this happens
- you have a prolonged or painful erection, especially if it lasts for more than 2 hours

[Find your nearest A&E](#)

Immediate action required:Call 999 now if:

- you have a seizure or fit
- you have chest pain

Stop taking tadalafil if you get any of these symptoms.

If you get chest pain during or after sex and you usually use nitrates, such as [glyceryl trinitrate \(GTN\)](#), do not take them to treat your chest pain.

Information:

Do not drive yourself to A&E.

The person you speak to at 999 will give you advice about what to do.

Serious allergic reaction

In rare cases, tadalafil can cause a serious allergic reaction ([anaphylaxis](#)).

Immediate action required:Call 999 now if:

- your lips, mouth, throat or tongue suddenly become swollen
- you're breathing very fast or struggling to breathe (you may become very wheezy or feel like you're choking or gasping for air)
- your throat feels tight or you're struggling to swallow
- your skin, tongue or lips turn blue, grey or pale (if you have black or brown skin, this may be easier to see on the palms of your hands or soles of your feet)
- you suddenly become very confused, drowsy or dizzy
- someone faints and cannot be woken up

- a child is limp, floppy or not responding like they normally do (their head may fall to the side, backwards or forwards, or they may find it difficult to lift their head or focus on your face)

You or the person who's unwell may also have a rash that's swollen, raised, itchy, blistered or peeling.

These can be signs of a serious allergic reaction and may need immediate treatment in hospital.

Information:

Do not drive yourself to A&E.

The person you speak to at 999 will give you advice about what to do.

Other side effects

These are not all the side effects of tadalafil. For a full list, see the leaflet inside your medicine packet.

Pregnancy, breastfeeding and fertility while taking tadalafil-Brand names: Cialis, Adcirca

Tadalafil and pregnancy

Tadalafil is not often prescribed in pregnancy, but it may be recommended if you have [pulmonary hypertension](#).

Pulmonary hypertension is an extremely serious condition in pregnancy. If you have this condition, it's important to use reliable contraception (for example a [contraceptive implant](#) or a [coil](#)) and to talk to your doctor before trying for a baby. Your heart condition will need to be assessed so that you can be given information on the risks of pregnancy to your health.

If you become pregnant while taking tadalafil, you will usually be recommended to continue to take it throughout pregnancy. This is because the risks from pulmonary hypertension are potentially life-threatening without treatment.

It's important to let your doctors know that you are pregnant as early as possible. This is because you will need to be reviewed in a specialist pregnancy and heart clinic throughout your pregnancy. You will be considered a high-risk pregnancy and will have a lot of additional care.

Tadalafil and breastfeeding

If you are breastfeeding and have pulmonary hypertension, tadalafil is not usually prescribed, unless a specialist recommends it.

Tadalafil and fertility

There's no evidence to suggest that taking tadalafil will reduce fertility in either women or men.

However, speak to a pharmacist or doctor before taking it if you're trying to get pregnant.

Non-urgent advice: Tell your doctor if you're:

- trying to get pregnant
- pregnant
- breastfeeding

Taking tadalafil with other medicines and herbal supplements-Brand names: Cialis, Adcirca

Cautions with other medicines

Some medicines do not mix well with tadalafil.

Tell your doctor or pharmacist if you're taking these medicines before you start tadalafil:

- nitrates for chest pain, such as [glyceryl trinitrate \(GTN\)](#)
- riociguat for [pulmonary hypertension](#)

Mixing tadalafil with herbal remedies and supplements

There are lots of treatments that claim to be a "herbal Cialis", but there is no such thing.

A herbal Cialis has never been approved as a treatment for erectile dysfunction. These treatments may also be fake or unsafe.

Some complementary therapies may have ingredients that could affect the way tadalafil works and cause side effects.

There's not enough information to say whether complementary medicines, [herbal remedies](#) and supplements are safe to take with tadalafil. They're not tested in the same way as pharmacy and prescription medicines. They're generally not tested for the effect they have on other medicines.

Important: Medicine safety

Tell your doctor or pharmacist if you're taking any other medicines, including herbal remedies, vitamins or supplements.

Common questions about tadalafil-Brand names: Cialis, Adcirca

How does tadalafil work?

Tadalafil belongs to a group of medicines called phosphodiesterase 5 (PDE5) inhibitors.

If you have [erectile dysfunction](#), it works by temporarily increasing blood flow to the penis when you get sexually excited.

It helps reduce symptoms of an [enlarged prostate gland](#), such as difficulty peeing or needing to pee urgently, by relaxing the muscles in the prostate and bladder.

It helps [pulmonary hypertension](#) by relaxing blood vessels in the chest. This increases blood supply to the lungs and reduces the workload of the heart.

How long does it take to work?

Tadalafil usually starts to work within 30 to 60 minutes.

If you're taking it for erectile dysfunction, it's triggered by sexual stimulation, so you need to be aroused for it to work.

How long will it work for?

If you're taking it for erectile dysfunction, you should be able to get an erection at any time between 30 minutes and 36 hours after taking tadalafil. You need to be sexually excited for it to work.

Your erection should go away after you have had sex.

How well does it work for erection problems?

Tadalafil works well for erectile dysfunction.

If tadalafil does not work for you, it may be because:

- you have not waited long enough after taking it before trying to have sex
- you have waited too long after taking it to have sex
- the dose is not high enough
- you're not sexually aroused enough

Can I take it as often as I want?

No – do not take tadalafil more than once a day.

How does it compare with other medicines that improve erections?

Other medicines are usually taken on demand, 30 to 60 minutes before sexual activity.

The alternatives to tadalafil work for up to 4 hours. If you take tadalafil, it can be effective for up to 36 hours.

If tadalafil does not work, there are other tablets you could try that work in a similar way, such as:

- sildenafil (Viagra)
- avanafil (Spedra)
- vardenafil (Levitra)

Only [sildenafil \(Viagra\)](#) is available without prescription.

You can take tadalafil and vardenafil with or without food.

However, it's best to take sildenafil and avanafil on an empty stomach for fastest effects. Eating a meal that is high in fat may delay the effect of vardenafil.

Alprostadil (only available with a prescription) is a synthetic hormone that helps to stimulate blood flow to the penis.

Alprostadil comes as:

- an injection directly into your penis
- a small pellet placed inside your urethra (the tube that carries pee from your bladder to the tip of your penis)

If you cannot get erections because of a hormonal problem, your doctor may refer you to an endocrinologist (a doctor who specialises in the treatment of hormonal problems). They may recommend hormone injections to bring your body's levels back to normal.

Are there other treatments that can help erections?

Other treatments for [erectile dysfunction](#) include:

- a vacuum pump
- psychological treatments
- penile implants
- pelvic floor muscle exercises

Some complementary therapies, such as acupuncture, have been claimed to treat erectile dysfunction. But there's little evidence they work.

Are there any other medicines for an enlarged prostate?

Tadalafil (5mg only) is the only medicine in its group (phosphodiesterase 5 (PDE5) inhibitors) that treats an enlarged prostate.

Other medicines prescribed are:

- 5-alpha reductase inhibitors, such as [finasteride](#) and dutasteride
- alpha-blockers, such as [tamsulosin](#) and alfuzosin

Are there any other medicines for pulmonary hypertension?

If tadalafil does not work, a doctor might recommend [sildenafil](#), which works in a similar way.

Other medicines used to treat pulmonary hypertension are:

- endothelin receptor antagonists – such as bosentan, ambrisentan and macitentan
- soluble guanylate cyclase stimulators – such as riociguat
- prostaglandins – such as epoprostenol, iloprost and treprostinil
- calcium channel blockers – [nifedipine](#), [diltiazem](#), nicardipine and [amlodipine](#)

Can women use tadalafil?

Women can use tadalafil for pulmonary hypertension.

There's no good evidence that tadalafil works for women with sexual problems.

Will it affect my contraception?

Tadalafil does not affect any type of contraception, including the [combined pill](#) and [emergency contraception](#).

Can I drive or ride a bike?

Occasionally tadalafil can make you feel [dizzy](#). If this happens to you, do not drive, cycle or use machines or tools until you feel better.

It's an offence to drive a car if your ability to drive safely is affected. It's your responsibility to decide if it's safe to drive. If you're in any doubt, do not drive.

Talk to your doctor or pharmacist if you're unsure whether it's safe for you to drive while taking tadalafil. [GOV.UK has more information on the law on drugs and driving](#).

Can I drink alcohol while taking tadalafil?

Having 1 beer or glass of wine is unlikely to stop or delay tadalafil from working. But if you're taking it for erectile dysfunction, drinking lots of alcohol can make it more difficult to get an erection.

To get the most benefit from tadalafil, do not drink heavily before taking it.

Is there any food or drink I need to avoid?

Do not drink grapefruit juice if you're taking tadalafil. It can affect the way the medicine works.

Can lifestyle changes improve erections?

Erectile dysfunction can often be improved if you make changes to your lifestyle, such as:

- maintaining a healthy weight
- quitting smoking
- cutting down on the amount of alcohol you drink
- not taking recreational drugs
- exercising
- reducing stress

Can lifestyle changes help symptoms of an enlarged prostate gland?

If you're taking tadalafil to treat symptoms of an enlarged prostate gland, you might be able to help the symptoms by making some simple changes to your lifestyle:

- drink fewer fizzy drinks and less alcohol, and cut down on caffeine (including tea, coffee, energy drinks and cola) and artificial sweeteners – these can irritate the bladder and make peeing more uncomfortable
- drink less liquid in the evening – try to reduce the amount you drink in the evening and avoid drinking anything for 2 hours before you go to bed. This might help you avoid getting up in the night. Make sure you're still drinking enough fluid earlier in the day
- empty your bladder – remember to go to the toilet before long journeys if you know you will not be able to reach a toilet easily
- try double voiding – this means waiting a few moments after you have finished peeing before trying to go again. It can help you empty your bladder properly. But take care not to strain or push
- check your medicines – check with a doctor whether any medicines you take, such as antidepressants or decongestants, may be making your symptoms worse
- eat more fibre – eating more fruit, vegetables and wholegrains helps you avoid constipation, which can put pressure on the bladder and make symptoms of an enlarged prostate worse

Will recreational drugs affect it?

Taking poppers (amyl nitrite) with tadalafil can have a dangerous effect on your heart.

It can also be dangerous to take tadalafil with:

- stimulants like MDMA (ecstasy) or cocaine
- hallucinogens like LSD
- novel psychoactive substances (which used to be known as legal highs) like mephedrone

Tadalafil has not been properly tested with recreational drugs.

Talk to a doctor if you think you might use any recreational drugs with tadalafil.

You can find out about the side effects of recreational drugs on the [Frank website](#).

Source: <https://www.nhs.uk/medicines/tadalafil/>