

Viagra (sildenafil) basics

Helps you get aroused and achieve an erection/orgasm. Viagra (sildenafil) is an effective, first-choice treatment for erectile dysfunction. However, you need to take Viagra (sildenafil) at least 30 minutes before having sex, so the lack of spontaneity may not work for some people.

What to expect when starting

Here's when people typically experience benefits as well as some possible side effects. Your experience may be different.

	Hours	Days	Weeks	Months	Long term
Viagra (sildenafil) Drug effectiveness					
Possible side effects					
Headache 16% chance vs. 7% placebo*					
Flushing 10% chance vs. 2% placebo*					
Low blood pressure†					
Abnormal vision†					
Indigestion 3% chance vs. 2% placebo*					

* Placebo is a sugar pill with no medicinal benefit.

† Data on frequency of side effects is not available.

Tips from pharmacists

- It's best to take Viagra (sildenafil) about 1 hour before sexual activity, but you can take it anywhere between 30 minutes and 4 hours before you need it.
- Don't take Viagra (sildenafil) more than once a day.
- If you have an erection for more than 4 hours, go to the Emergency Department or call your doctor immediately.
- If you take isosorbide dinitrate, isosorbide mononitrate, nitroglycerin, riociguat, or ritonavir, talk to your doctor about appropriate medication administration. It can be dangerous to take these medications at the same time as Viagra (sildenafil).
- Viagra (sildenafil) does not stop the spread of diseases like HIV or hepatitis that are passed through blood or having sex. Do not have any kind of sex without using a latex or polyurethane condom. Do not share needles or other things like toothbrushes or razors.

Risks and warnings

Contact your doctor if you experience any of these.

Heart attack or stroke

Taking Viagra (sildenafil) for erectile dysfunction can put you at increased risk for heart attack or stroke if you've had problems with your heart in the past. It is not recommended for men to take Viagra (sildenafil) if they've had a heart attack in the past 3 months or a stroke or a diagnosis of moderate to severe heart failure in the past 6 months. Talk to your doctor if you are interested in taking this medication.

Prolonged erection

There have been reports of men having an erection lasting more than 4 hours while on Viagra (sildenafil). This has been rare; however, if it occurs and not treated in time, can cause permanent damage to your penis, including impotence. Talk to your doctor immediately or go to the emergency room if this happens.

Vision changes

There have been reports of men having permanent damage to their vision while on Viagra (sildenafil). Although this incidence is rare, go to the emergency room or call your doctor immediately if you suddenly notice changes in your vision in one or both eyes.