Vardenafil Hydrochloride (Levitra®)

Pronounced: var-DEN-a-fil

Classification: Phosphodiesterase Inhibitor

About Vardenafil Hydrochloride (Levitra®)

Vardenafil is a medication that is taken before sexual activity and allows men with erectile dysfunction (ED) to achieve and maintain an erection. ED or impotence is a condition in which a man is unable to achieve or maintain an erection long enough for sexual intercourse. This can be a result of medical conditions such as high blood pressure, diabetes, prostate problems, and heart disease, or a side effect of the medications typically taken for these conditions. Personal lifestyle factors such as stress, alcohol and/or tobacco use can also play a contributing role. During surgery or radiation to the pelvic area (including prostate, bladder, and rectal procedures), damage can occur to the nerves that supply the penis. This can result in either temporary or permanent impotence. Some surgeons perform "nerve-sparing" surgeries in an attempt to preserve erectile function. Even in these cases, however, the nerves will suffer some injury, and it can take 18-24 months or longer for erectile function to return. These men should be treated aggressively with oral or injectable medications for ED in order to speed recovery of the nerves and to prevent muscle wasting in the penis.

How to Take Vardenafil

- Vardenafil is taken by mouth up to once a day, at least 60 minutes before sexual activity, and works for up to 4 hours. It can be taken with or without food.
- Your doctor will determine the dose that is best for you. Some men require dose adjustments to find the dose that works best for them.
- Men who take vardenafil will not have an erection without sexual stimulation. This drug is not an aphrodisiac and does not affect libido or desire. Having multiple intercourse sessions with one dose has not been studied.
- Do not adjust your dose without talking to your provider first.
- Men who take nitrates, such as nitroglycerin, Nitro-Bid, Isordil, or Deponit should not take vardenafil.
- Men who take Cardura, Flomax, or Hytrin for urinary symptoms should not take vardenafil.
- This medication can affect how other medications work. Be sure your provider and pharmacist know all the medication (prescription and over-the-counter) and supplements you take.

Storage and Handling

Store your medication in the original, labeled container at room temperature and in a dry location (unless otherwise directed by your healthcare provider or pharmacist). This medication should not be stored in a pillbox since it should only be taken prior to sexual activity. Keep containers out of reach of children and pets. Ask your care team where to return any unused medication for disposal. Do not flush down the toilet or throw in the trash.

Where do I get this medication?

Vardenafil is available through most retail pharmacies.

Insurance Information

This medication may be covered under your prescription drug plan. Patient assistance may be available to qualifying
individuals without prescription drug coverage through the pharmaceutical company that makes the medication. Your care team can help you find these resources, if they are available.

**Possible Side Effects of Vardenafil**

There are a few side effects experienced with vardenafil. Talk to your care team if you have concerns about these side effects. Do not take a higher dose of vardenafil than your provider orders for you.

- Headache, facial flushing, stuffy or runny nose, and upset stomach can occur.
- Less frequent side effects include blurry vision, a bluish hue to the field of vision, difficulty telling the difference between the colors blue and green, a sensitivity to light, or a sudden loss of vision or hearing.

If you experience any of the following while using vardenafil, seek immediate medical attention:

- An erection lasting more than 4 hours.
- Chest, arm or neck pain, or nausea during sexual activity.
- Sudden loss of vision or hearing.

**Reproductive Concerns**

Remember, vardenafil does not protect against sexually transmitted diseases, nor does it prevent pregnancy. Effective birth control is recommended during cancer treatment. Even if you are not producing sperm, you could still be fertile and conceive.