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If you have moderate to severe pain, you may be prescribed Ultram. You may be more familiar with its generic name, Tramadol.

Ultram is a high alert medication, which means if you do not take it exactly as prescribed it may cause illness or injury.

To understand how Ultram works, let's look at how pain affects your body.

Thousands of tiny nerve cells in your body sense many feelings; cold, heat, pressure, and pain. When your body is injured, the tiny nerve cells send a message to your brain that says: I'm in pain here!

Ultram works in the brain to change how your body feels and responds to pain.

Ultram comes in a tablet and is available in different types of doses. You may be prescribed a short-acting dose for pain that comes and goes. Or you may be prescribed an extended release dose for pain that is there all the time. In some cases, your doctor may recommend a combination of short-acting and extended release doses. Make sure you understand exactly what you are taking and how you are supposed to take it to avoid injury.

Ultram is a powerful medication. Some people should not take it. Do not take Ultram if you are allergic to Tramadol.

Do not take Ultram if you have a blockage in your stomach or intestines.

If you are pregnant, or planning to get pregnant, tell your healthcare provider. Do not breastfeed while taking Ultram.

Before taking Ultram, tell your healthcare provider if you have a history of seizures, head injury, liver or kidney disease, stomach disorders, or depression.

Ultram can be highly addictive. If you have a history of abuse of: street drugs, prescription medications, or alcohol, tell your healthcare provider. There may be a different medication available for you.

Ultram may interact with certain medications like anti-depressants and cause severe side effects. Before taking Ultram, give your healthcare provider a complete list of all other medications you use, including vitamins and herbal supplements.

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Some side effects of Ultram include: headache, dizziness, tired feeling, nausea, constipation, diarrhea, feeling nervous, itching, sweating, and redness.

If you do notice any of these side effects, contact your healthcare provider about how to manage them.

Be aware that you are at an increased risk of falling while taking Ultram. Get up from a sitting or lying position slowly.

Do not drive or operate heavy machinery, including your car, until you know how Ultram affects you.

Do not drink alcohol while taking Ultram. Drinking alcohol while taking Ultram can cause serious side effects leading to death.

If you have an allergic reaction like: trouble breathing, hives, or swelling of your face or throat, call 911.

If you have: seizures, weak or shallow breathing, fast heartbeat, hallucinations, feel like you might pass out, a severe rash on your face or upper body, increased body temperature, or loss of coordination, call 911 and get help right away.

This is not a complete list of side effects. Make sure you discuss all possible side effects with your healthcare provider.

Take Ultram exactly as prescribed. Do not change your dose or take it for longer than prescribed.

If you are taking Ultram Extended Release, always swallow the tablet whole with plenty of water. Do not cut, break, chew, crush, dissolve or inject this medication.

Ultram Extended release should be taken at the same time every day. If you miss a dose, take your Ultram as soon as you remember.

Do not double dose to make up for a missed dose. Return to your normal medication schedule as soon as possible.

If you think you have taken too much Ultram, call 911. An overdose of Ultram can cause serious breathing problems that can lead to death.

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Store Ultram away from moisture and direct sunlight. Your bathroom medicine cabinet is not the best place because of moisture. Do not leave your medication where it can get too hot or too cold. Always store your medication out of sight and out of reach of children to prevent accidents.

Because Ultram is a medication that can cause dependency, it can be a very desirable drug to addicts. Lock this medication up to prevent stealing and abuse.

When you are done taking Ultram, crush all of your remaining pills and mix them with undesirable trash like kitty litter or coffee grounds.

Do not sell or give your Ultram to anyone else. It is against the law and can seriously harm anyone else taking it. Contact your local police station for more information on proper disposal directions.

Ultram can help you relieve your pain. But it is a powerful medication that should only be taken exactly as prescribed. If you have any questions about Ultram, ask your healthcare provider and pharmacist for more information.