

# Missed dose guide

General principles by drug class, drawn from FDA labeling. Your own label and your prescriber always come first.

## Three rules that cover most situations

- Take the missed dose when you remember, unless it's close to the next one. If it's close, skip it and get back on schedule.
- Never take a double dose to catch up unless your prescriber has specifically told you to.
- When in doubt, call the pharmacy. It's a routine question and they answer it all day.

## By drug class

Class	What generally applies
SSRIs and SNRIs	Take when remembered unless close to the next dose, then skip. Don't double. Shorter half-life drugs (paroxetine, venlafaxine) are the ones where a missed day is most likely to be felt as dizziness or brain zaps.
Bupropion (Wellbutrin)	Skip a missed dose rather than squeezing doses together. Keep the spacing on the label, because seizure risk rises with dose and with doses too close together. Never double.
Stimulants (ADHD)	If it's late in the day, usually skip it rather than pay for it with a sleepless night. Ask your prescriber where the cutoff time is for your specific medication.
Benzodiazepines	Take when remembered unless close to the next dose. If taken regularly, don't stop abruptly. Missed doses can bring rebound anxiety, so mention patterns of missing to your prescriber.
Sleep medications	Skip it. Only take a sleep medication when you can still give it a full night. A middle-of-the-night dose of most sleep medications means next-day impairment.
Lithium	Skip if it's close to the next dose and never double, because the gap between a helpful level and a toxic one is narrow. Tell your prescriber about repeated misses, since levels are what they steer by.
Lamotrigine (Lamictal)	A gap of several days is different here. Restarting at full dose can raise the risk of a serious rash, so the dose may need to be titrated up again. Call your prescriber before restarting.
Antipsychotics	Take when remembered unless close to the next dose, then skip. For long-acting injections, call the clinic as soon as you know an appointment was missed. The window matters.
MAOIs	Follow the label exactly and never double. MAOIs have strict timing and food rules, so a missed dose question goes straight to the prescriber or pharmacist.

## Call your prescriber rather than guessing when

- You've missed several days in a row of any psychiatric medication.
- The medication is lamotrigine, lithium, clozapine, or an MAOI.
- You keep missing doses at the same time of day. The schedule may need to change, and that's a fixable problem.
- You feel withdrawal-like symptoms: dizziness, nausea, irritability, brain zaps, or rebound anxiety.

### For educational purposes only

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