

iMedix: Your Personal Health Advisor.

Cialis

Cialis is a prescription medication containing the active ingredient tadalafil. It is a phosphodiesterase type 5 (PDE5) inhibitor approved for the treatment of erectile dysfunction (ED) and the signs and symptoms of benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH).

- **ActiveIngredient:** Tadalafil
 - **DosageForm:** Oral tablets
 - **Dosage:** 2.5 mg, 5 mg, 10 mg, 20 mg
 - **Indications:** Treatment of erectile dysfunction (ED); Treatment of the signs and symptoms of benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH); Treatment of ED and the signs and symptoms of BPH (ED/BPH).
 - **Manufacturer:** Eli Lilly and Company (Brand); generic manufacturers include Teva Pharmaceuticals, Aurobindo Pharma, and Torrent Pharmaceuticals.
 - **Storage:** Store at 25°C (77°F); excursions permitted to 15°C–30°C (59°F–86°F). Keep out of reach of children.
 - **Market Price:**
 - **Drug Status:** Prescription Only
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Description

What is Cialis (Tadalafil)? Cialis is the brand name for the prescription drug tadalafil. It is classified as a phosphodiesterase type 5 (PDE5) inhibitor. This medication is indicated for the treatment of erectile dysfunction (ED) in adult men and for the treatment of the signs and symptoms of benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH). Its primary mechanism of action is the inhibition of the PDE5 enzyme, leading to increased levels of cyclic guanosine monophosphate (cGMP). This results in relaxation of smooth muscle tissue and increased blood flow in specific areas of the body, depending on the condition being treated. A key pharmacokinetic characteristic of tadalafil is its extended half-life of approximately 17.5 hours, which allows for a prolonged duration of therapeutic effect compared to other medications in its class.

General Instructions

How to Take Cialis Cialis is available in two primary dosing regimens, which are prescribed based on the specific medical indication. **For Erectile Dysfunction (ED)** As-needed dosing: A single tablet is taken prior to anticipated sexual activity. The recommended starting dose for most patients is 10 mg. Based on efficacy and tolerability, the dose may be increased to 20 mg or decreased to 5 mg. The medication may be taken at least 30 minutes before sexual activity and is effective for up to 36 hours. **Once-daily dosing:** A lower dose (2.5 mg or 5 mg) is taken once per day at approximately the same time, without regard to timing of sexual activity. This regimen is appropriate for patients who anticipate frequent sexual activity (e.g., twice weekly). The choice between as-needed and once-daily dosing should be made in consultation with a physician. For a detailed analysis, refer to the guide on daily vs. as-needed Cialis. **For Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia (BPH)** The recommended dose for the treatment of the signs and symptoms of BPH is 5 mg taken once daily at approximately the same time each day. **Administration Notes** Cialis may be taken with or without food; a high-fat meal does not alter its absorption to a clinically significant degree. The tablet should be swallowed whole with water. The maximum recommended dosing frequency is once per day.

Side Effects

Side Effects of Cialis The use of Cialis (tadalafil) is associated with a range of possible adverse reactions, resulting from its vasodilatory effects. For a broader context on common side effects of ED medications, see this urologist's guide. **Reported Side Effects of Cialis (Tadalafil) Frequency Category Side Effects Common** Headache, dyspepsia (indigestion), back pain, myalgia (muscle pain), nasal congestion, flushing, pain in limb. **Less Common** Dizziness, gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD), visual disturbances (e.g., blurred vision, changes in color vision). **Serious (Seek Immediate Medical Attention)** Priapism: An erection lasting more than 4 hours. Sudden hearing loss or tinnitus. Sudden vision loss in one or both eyes (a symptom of non-arteritic anterior ischemic optic neuropathy, NAION). Signs of a cardiovascular event (e.g., chest pain, shortness of breath during sexual activity). Signs of a severe allergic reaction (e.g., rash, hives, swelling of the face/lips).

Uses

What is Cialis Used For? Cialis (tadalafil) is approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for two distinct indications in adult men. **Erectile Dysfunction (ED)** Cialis is indicated for the treatment of erectile dysfunction. It is effective when sexual stimulation occurs. The medication is not an aphrodisiac and does not increase libido. **Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia (BPH)** Cialis is indicated for the treatment of the signs and symptoms of benign prostatic hyperplasia. This includes the relief of lower urinary tract symptoms such as urinary frequency, urgency, weak stream, and nocturia. For more information on BPH and its treatment, see this guide to BPH medications. **Important Note on Use** Treatment with Cialis for either indication requires a diagnosis from a qualified healthcare professional. It should only be used under medical supervision.

Safety advice

Interactions Alcohol:

- Use with caution
- Both alcohol and tadalafil act as vasodilators. Concomitant use, particularly in excess, may potentiate vasodilatory effects such as orthostatic hypotension, dizziness, tachycardia, and headache. For detailed considerations, see [this article on alcohol and ED medications](#).

Interactions Other Medications:

- Consult your doctor
- Cialis has significant and potentially dangerous interactions. It is absolutely contraindicated with any form of organic nitrate or nitric oxide donor. Concomitant use with alpha-blockers (e.g., [tamsulosin](#)) requires caution and possibly dose adjustment due to the risk of symptomatic hypotension. All concomitant medications must be reviewed by a prescribing physician.

Special Groups Pregnancy:

- Unsafe
- Cialis is not indicated for use in women, including during pregnancy.

Special Groups Breastfeeding:

- Unsafe
- Cialis is not indicated for use in women, including those who are breastfeeding.

Special Groups Elderly:

- Use with caution

- No dose adjustment is required based solely on age. However, greater sensitivity to the hypotensive effects or other adverse reactions is possible. Consideration of age-related decreases in renal function is also warranted.

Special Groups Children:

- Unsafe
- Cialis is not indicated for use in pediatric patients under 18 years of age.

Effects on Activities Driving:

- Use with caution
- Cialis can cause dizziness and somnolence. Patients should be aware of how they react to the medication before driving or operating complex machinery. For more on this topic, see [this resource on medicines and driving](#).

Effects on Activities Operating Machinery:

- Use with caution
 - The same caution regarding dizziness and somnolence applies to operating machinery.
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Concerns

Important Safety Concerns and Considerations Cardiovascular Risk Sexual activity presents a potential cardiac risk for patients with pre-existing cardiovascular disease. Cialis has vasodilatory properties that cause a mild, transient decrease in blood pressure. It is contraindicated in patients for whom sexual activity is not advised due to underlying cardiovascular status. Physicians should evaluate cardiovascular fitness prior to initiating treatment. Effects on the Eye Non-arteritic anterior ischemic optic neuropathy (NAION), a condition leading to sudden vision loss, has been reported rarely in temporal association with the use of PDE5 inhibitors, including tadalafil. Patients with a history of NAION in one eye have an increased risk of NAION in the other eye. Use in these patients should be undertaken with caution. Hearing Impairment Sudden decrease or loss of hearing, sometimes accompanied by tinnitus and dizziness, has been reported in temporal association with the intake of PDE5 inhibitors, including tadalafil. A causal relationship has not been definitively established, but patients experiencing such symptoms should discontinue Cialis and seek prompt medical attention. Prolonged Erection and Priapism Prolonged erection exceeding 4 hours and priapism (a painful erection lasting more than 6 hours) have been reported infrequently. Priapism requires immediate medical intervention to avoid permanent damage to penile tissues and subsequent erectile dysfunction.

Warnings

Critical Warnings for Cialis Use Contraindication with Nitrates The use of Cialis is strictly contraindicated in patients who are using any form of organic nitrate or nitric oxide donor, either regularly or intermittently. This includes nitroglycerin, isosorbide mononitrate/dinitrate, and recreational amyl nitrite (“poppers”). The co-administration can cause a profound and life-threatening drop in blood pressure. Patients with heart disease who may use nitrates require particular caution. Concomitant Use with Alpha-Blockers and Antihypertensives Cialis may augment the blood-pressure-lowering effect of alpha-blockers and other antihypertensive medications. Concomitant use with alpha-blockers is not recommended except if the patient is stable on his alpha-blocker therapy. In such cases, initiating Cialis at the lowest possible dose (2.5 mg for daily or 5 mg for as-needed) is advised. Renal and Hepatic Impairment Dosage adjustments are recommended for patients with significant renal impairment. For patients with severe renal impairment (creatinine clearance less than 30 mL/min), the recommended dose for ED is 5 mg not more than once every 72 hours, and the daily dose for ED or BPH should not exceed 2.5 mg. Cialis is not recommended for use in patients with severe hepatic impairment (Child-Pugh Class C). Underlying Etiology of ED and BPH Prior to

initiating treatment, a medical evaluation should be conducted to determine the underlying cause of ED or the urinary symptoms of BPH. Cialis treats the symptoms but does not alter the underlying pathophysiology.

Dosage

Cialis Dosage Information The appropriate dosage of Cialis (tadalafil) is determined by the treating physician based on the indication, patient's health status, and tolerability. The following table outlines the standard dosing regimens.

Standard Dosing for Cialis (Tadalafil)	Indication	Dosage	Regimen	Strength Options & Notes
Erectile Dysfunction (ED) – As-Needed	Take one tablet prior to anticipated sexual activity.	Starting dose: 10 mg	May increase to: 20 mg	May decrease to: 5 mg
		Dosing frequency: Maximum once per day.		
Erectile Dysfunction (ED) – Once-Daily	Take one tablet at the same time each day.	Recommended dose: 2.5 mg or 5 mg	Allows for spontaneous sexual activity.	
Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia (BPH)	Take one tablet at the same time each day.	Recommended dose: 5 mg	ED and BPH (concomitant)	
Important Administration Notes	Missed Dose (Daily Dosing): If a daily dose is missed, it should be taken as soon as remembered. If it is almost time for the next dose, the missed dose should be skipped. A double dose should not be taken to make up for a missed dose.			
Dose Adjustments: Lower doses are recommended for patients with renal or moderate hepatic impairment, and for those taking concomitant potent CYP3A4 inhibitors (e.g., ketoconazole, ritonavir).				
Duration of Effect: For the as-needed 10 mg or 20 mg dose, the effect may last up to 36 hours. This does not imply a continuous erection but rather the ability to achieve an erection with stimulation during this window.				

Interactions

Drug Interactions with Cialis Cialis (tadalafil) is metabolized primarily by the CYP3A4 enzyme system. Its pharmacokinetics and effects can be significantly altered by concomitant medications, necessitating a thorough review by a healthcare provider.

Significant Drug Interactions with Cialis (Tadalafil)	Interacting Substance Class	Examples	Potential Effect & Clinical Recommendation
Nitrates (Absolute Contraindication)	Nitroglycerin, isosorbide mononitrate, amyl nitrite.	Profound hypotension, potentially life-threatening.	Concomitant use is prohibited.
		Alpha-Blockers	Tamsulosin, doxazosin, terazosin.
Potent CYP3A4 Inhibitors	Ketoconazole, itraconazole, ritonavir, clarithromycin.	Markedly increases tadalafil exposure.	For as-needed dosing, a maximum single dose of 10 mg every 72 hours is recommended. For daily dosing, the dose should not exceed 2.5 mg.
Antihypertensives	Beta-blockers, ACE inhibitors, calcium channel blockers.	Potential for additive blood pressure-lowering effect.	Monitoring is advised.
Alcohol		May increase vasodilatory symptoms (orthostatic hypotension, dizziness, tachycardia).	

FAQs

- **How long does Cialis stay in your system and remain effective?**

Tadalafil has a half-life of approximately 17.5 hours. For the as-needed dose (10 mg or 20 mg), the therapeutic effect for erectile dysfunction may last up to 36 hours. This refers to the window of time during which a man may be able to achieve an erection with sexual stimulation. For more details, see [this doctor's explanation](#).

- **What is the main difference between Cialis and Viagra (sildenafil)?**

The primary differences are duration of action and onset. Cialis (tadalafil) can be effective for up to 36 hours, whereas Viagra (sildenafil) is typically effective for 4-6 hours. Cialis is also approved for daily use in treating ED and the symptoms of BPH. For a comprehensive comparison, refer to [this urologist's guide to ED pills](#).

- **Is generic tadalafil as effective as brand-name Cialis?**

Generic tadalafil contains the same active ingredient in the same strength as the brand-name product. Regulatory authorities require generic drugs to demonstrate bioequivalence, meaning they deliver the same amount of active ingredient into the bloodstream in the same timeframe. Therefore, generic tadalafil is therapeutically equivalent to Cialis. For other generic options, see [Vidalista](#) or [Tadalista](#).

- **Why is Cialis so expensive, and are there ways to reduce the cost?**

Brand-name prescription medications often have a higher cost due to research, development, and marketing. Cost-saving strategies may include using a generic version (tadalafil), using a pharmacy discount card, or exploring patient assistance programs if eligible. For practical advice, see [this guide to making tadalafil affordable](#).

- **What are the alternatives if Cialis is not suitable or effective?**

Several other FDA-approved PDE5 inhibitors are available for ED, such as sildenafil ([Viagra](#)), vardenafil, and avanafil. For BPH, other classes of medication like alpha-blockers or 5-alpha-reductase inhibitors may be options. Other non-oral treatments for ED include penile injections, vacuum erection devices, and surgical implants. A physician can determine the most appropriate alternative based on the individual's medical history.

Other Details

Additional Information Available Forms and Strengths Cialis (tadalafil) is available as film-coated, almond-shaped tablets in the following strengths for oral administration: 2.5 mg, 5 mg, 10 mg, and 20 mg. Other formulations, such as Cialis Professional, may also be available. Storage and Handling Store at 25°C (77°F); excursions permitted between 15°C and 30°C (59°F and 86°F). Keep in the original container to protect from moisture and light. Keep out of reach of children and pets. Historical Context Tadalafil was discovered and developed by the biotechnology company ICOS, and later co-marketed with Eli Lilly and Company. It received FDA approval for the treatment of erectile dysfunction in November 2003. Its approval for the signs and symptoms of benign prostatic hyperplasia followed in October 2011. Reporting Side Effects Patients are encouraged to report negative side effects of prescription drugs to their healthcare provider and to the relevant national regulatory authority (e.g., the FDA's MedWatch program in the United States).

References

References and Medical Sources U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Cialis (tadalafil) Prescribing Information. [Revised 2023]. https://www.accessdata.fda.gov/drugsatfda_docs/label/2011/021368s20s211bl.pdf MedlinePlus. Tadalafil. U.S. National Library of Medicine; [Updated 2024]. <https://medlineplus.gov/druginfo/meds/a604008.html> American Urological Association (AUA). Erectile Dysfunction: AUA Guideline (2018). [https://www.auanet.org/guidelines/guidelines/erectile-dysfunction-\(ed\)-guideline](https://www.auanet.org/guidelines/guidelines/erectile-dysfunction-(ed)-guideline) American Urological Association (AUA). Management of Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia/Lower Urinary Tract Symptoms: AUA Guideline (2021). [https://www.auanet.org/guidelines/guidelines/benign-prostatic-hyperplasia-\(bph\)-guideline](https://www.auanet.org/guidelines/guidelines/benign-prostatic-hyperplasia-(bph)-guideline)

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