

December 2019 ~ Resource #351213

Dispensing Dose Packs

A number of meds are available in dose packs. These may be **starter or titration packs** (also called initiation or loading packs in Canada), where the med dose is gradually increased; they may contain a **short course** of therapy; or they may be **tapering packs**, where the med dose is gradually reduced. Dose packs can be very convenient for patients. For example, they can take the guesswork out of adhering to a regimen when the dose is changing frequently. This may be the case when a dose must be increased slowly to reduce the risk of side effects, such as with milnacipran (*Savella*) or vilazodone (*Viibryd*), or when patients receive a higher dose to start then taper down to a lower dose, such as with methylprednisolone or certain blood thinners (apixaban [*Eliquis*], etc). However, prescriptions for dose packs can be a challenge, especially if a pharmacy doesn't stock particular packs. Plus there are some errors that can come up with starter packs. **Use the following strategies to prevent errors** with dose packs, and see our chart below for contents of commonly dispensed dose packs.¹

- Do a double check if you see that a dose pack Rx has a refill. In many cases, this will not be appropriate.
- Try to avoid filling an Rx for a starter pack and an Rx for a maintenance dose at the same time. This can help prevent problems, such as the patient taking both doses at the same time.
- Include clear instructions on the patient label when filling an Rx for a maintenance dose, such as by advising the patient not to start the maintenance dose until the starter pack has been completed.
- Help ensure patients who get dose packs receive pharmacist counseling, so the pharmacist can provide details about taking the med.

Brand (Generic)	Type and Contents of Pack	Days' Supply
<i>Adlyxin</i> ² (lixisenatide)	Starter pack (U.S. only): 10 mcg prefilled pen x 1; 20 mcg prefilled pen x 1	28 days
<i>Alunbrig</i> ^{20,28} (brigatinib)	Initiation pack: 90 mg tablets x 7; 180 mg tablets x 23 (U.S.) or 180 mg tablets x 21 (Canada)	30 days (U.S.) 28 days (Canada)
<i>Avelox</i> ⁴ (moxifloxacin)	ABC Pack (U.S. only): 400 mg tablets x 5	5 days

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Brand (Generic)	Type and Contents of Pack	Days' Supply
<i>Chantix</i> (U.S.) ⁵ <i>Champix</i> (Canada) ⁶ (varenicline)	<p>Starting month PAK (first month): 0.5 mg tablets x 11 per card (1 card); 1 mg tablets x 14 per card (3 cards) (Note that the Canadian product, called an initial dosing pack, has one card with 0.5 mg tablets x 11 and 1 mg tablets x 14, and a second card with 1 mg tablets x 28)</p> <p>Continuing month PAK (continuing months): 1 mg tablets x 14 per card (4 cards)</p> <p>Starting month box (first month): 0.5 mg tablets x 11 1 mg tablets x 42</p> <p>Continuing month box (continuing months): 1 mg x 56 tablets</p>	28 days (Starting month PAK or box [U.S.], Initial dosing pack [Canada])
<i>Cimzia</i> ³ (certolizumab pegol)	Starter kit (U.S. only): 200 mg prefilled pen x 6	28 days
<i>Eliquis</i> ⁷ (apixaban)	Starter pack for treatment of deep vein thrombosis (DVT) or pulmonary embolism (PE) (U.S. only): 5 mg tablets x 42 (1 blister pack) 5 mg tablets x 32 (1 blister pack)	30 days
<i>Emend</i> ^{30,31} (aprepitant)	Tri-Pack: 80 mg capsules x 2; 125 mg capsule x 1	3 days
<i>Fanapt</i> (U.S. only) ⁸ (iloperidone)	Titration pack: 1 mg tablets x 2; 2 mg tablets x 2; 4 mg tablets x 2; 6 mg tablets x 2	4 days
<i>Fetzima</i> ⁹ (levomilnacipran)	Titration pack (U.S. only): 20 mg capsules x 2; 40 mg capsules x 40	42 days

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Brand (Generic)	Type and Contents of Pack	Days' Supply
<i>Gralise</i> (U.S. only) ¹¹ (gabapentin)	Starter pack: 300 mg tablets x 9; 600 mg tablets x 69	30 days
<i>Humira</i> ²² (adalimumab)	(All are only available in the U.S.) Starter package for Crohn's disease, ulcerative colitis, or hidradenitis suppurativa: 40 mg/0.8 mL pen x 6 Starter package for Crohn's disease, ulcerative colitis, or hidradenitis suppurativa: 80 mg/0.8 mL pen x 3 Starter package for psoriasis, uveitis, or adolescent hidradenitis suppurativa: 40 mg/0.8 mL pen x 4 Starter package for psoriasis, uveitis, or adolescent hidradenitis suppurativa: 80 mg/0.8 mL pen x 1; 40 mg/0.4 mL pen x 2 Starter package for pediatric Crohn's disease: 40 mg/0.8 mL prefilled syringe x 6 Starter package for pediatric Crohn's disease: 80 mg/0.8 mL prefilled syringe x 3 Starter package for pediatric Crohn's disease: 40 mg/0.8 mL prefilled syringe x 3 Starter package for pediatric Crohn's disease: 80 mg/0.8 mL prefilled syringe x 1; 40 mg/0.4 mL prefilled syringe x1	Varies, depending on patient condition and dose.

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Brand (Generic)	Type and Contents of Pack	Days' Supply
<i>Ingrezza</i> (U.S. only) ²⁷ (valbenazine)	Initiation pack: 40 mg capsules x 7; 80 mg capsules x 21	28 days
<i>Lamictal</i> ^{12,29} (lamotrigine)	(All are only available in the U.S.) Starter kit for patients taking valproate (blue kit): 25 mg tablets x 35 Lamictal ODT titration kit for patients taking valproate (blue ODT kit): 25 mg ODT x 21; 50 mg ODT x 7 Lamictal XR titration kit for patients taking valproate (blue XR kit): 25 mg <i>Lamictal XR</i> tablets x 21; 50 mg <i>Lamictal XR</i> tablets x7 Starter kit for patients taking carbamazepine, phenytoin, phenobarbital, or primidone and NOT valproate (green kit): 25 mg tablets x 84 100 mg tablets x 14 Lamictal ODT titration kit for patients taking carbamazepine, phenytoin, phenobarbital, or primidone and NOT valproate (green ODT kit): 50 mg ODT x 42; 100 mg ODT x 14 Lamictal XR titration kit for patients taking carbamazepine, phenytoin, phenobarbital, or primidone and NOT valproate (green XR kit): 50 mg <i>Lamictal XR</i> tablets x 14; 100 mg <i>Lamictal XR</i> tablets x 14; 200 mg <i>Lamictal XR</i> tablets x 7; Starter kit for patients NOT taking carbamazepine, phenytoin, phenobarbital, primidone, or valproate (orange kit): 25 mg tablets x 42 100 mg tablets x 7	35 days
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Brand (Generic)	Type and Contents of Pack	Days' Supply
<i>Lamictal</i> ^{12,29} (lamotrigine), continued	Lamictal ODT titration kit for patients NOT taking carbamazepine, phenytoin, phenobarbital, primidone, or valproate (orange ODT kit): 25 mg ODT x 14; 50 mg ODT x 14; 100 mg ODT x 7 Lamictal XR titration kit for patients NOT taking carbamazepine, phenytoin, phenobarbital, primidone, or valproate (orange XR kit): 25 mg <i>Lamictal XR</i> tablets x 14; 50 mg <i>Lamictal XR</i> tablets x 14; 100 mg <i>Lamictal XR</i> tablets x 7	
<i>Medrol</i> ²⁵ (methylprednisolone)	DOSEPAK (U.S. only): 4 mg tablets x 21	6 days
<i>Namenda</i> (U.S. only) ¹³ (memantine)	Titration pack: 5 mg tablets x 28; 10 mg tablets x 21	28 days
<i>Namenda XR</i> (U.S. only) ¹⁴ (memantine extended-release)	Titration pack: 7 mg capsules x 7; 14 mg capsules x 7; 21 mg capsules x 7; 28 mg capsules x 7	28 days
<i>Otezla</i> ^{15,16} (apremilast)	Two-week starter pack: 10 mg tablets x 4; 20 mg tablets x 4; 30 mg tablets x 5; Plus an additional 30 mg tablets x 14 28-day starter pack (U.S. only): 10 mg tablets x 4; 20 mg tablets x 4; 30 mg tablets x 5; Plus an additional 30 mg tablets x 42	14 days (two-week pack) 28 days (28-day pack)

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Brand (Generic)	Type and Contents of Pack	Days' Supply
<i>Rebif</i> ¹⁷ (interferon beta-1a)	(All available in U.S. only) Titration pack: 8.8 mcg prefilled syringe x 6; 22 mcg prefilled syringe x 6 Rebidose titration pack: 8.8 mcg autoinjector x 6 22 mcg autoinjectors x 6	28 days
<i>Savella</i> (U.S. only) ¹⁸ (milnacipran)	Titration pack: 12.5 mg tablets x 5; 25 mg tablets x 8; 50 mg tablets x 42	28 days
<i>Tecfidera</i> ¹⁰ (dimethyl fumarate)	Starter pack (U.S. only): 120 mg capsules x 14 240 mg capsules x 46	30 days
<i>Uptravi</i> ²⁶ (selexipag)	Titration pack (U.S. only): 200 mcg tablets x 140 800 mcg tablets x 60	Varies, depending on tolerance of med and maintenance dose.
<i>Viibryd</i> ¹⁹ (vilazodone)	Starter kits: (U.S. only) 10 mg tablets x 7; 20 mg tablets x 7; 40 mg tablets x 16 or 10 mg tablets x 7; 20 mg tablets x 23	30 days

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Brand (Generic)	Type and Contents of Pack	Days' Supply
<i>Xarelto</i> ²¹ (rivaroxaban)	Starter pack for treatment of deep vein thrombosis (DVT) or pulmonary embolism (PE) (U.S. only): 15 mg tablets x 42; 20 mg tablets x 9	30 days
<i>Zithromax</i> ^{23,24} (azithromycin)	Z-PAK: 250 mg tablets x 6 TRI-PAK (U.S. only): 500 mg tablets x 3	Z-PAK: 5 days TRI-PAK: 3 days

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