

# Coping With Brain Shivers During Effexor Withdrawal

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Effexor is well-known to have a withdrawal syndrome, and in certain people, a gradual tapering off of their dosage is not effective in preventing this. Within a matter of hours of missing a dose, some people begin to experience symptoms.

This would explain why some people report that they experienced "brain shivers" when they are late taking their medication. They had unintentionally caused themselves to have withdrawal symptoms.

The good news is that "brain shivers" or electric shock-like sensations are not dangerous, but can be unpleasant.

## Effexor Withdrawal Syndrome

Antidepressant discontinuation syndrome is a well-known and accepted syndrome that can occur in patients who abruptly discontinue treatment with an [antidepressant](#) like a selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor (SSRI) or serotonin-norepinephrine reuptake inhibitor (SNRI). Because of this, healthcare providers often recommend slowly decreasing the dosage of an SSRI or SNRI when weaning from the drug.

When decreasing or stopping an antidepressant, a neurochemical change takes place in the brain. As the brain readjusts to the new environment, symptoms may present themselves.

Symptoms of withdrawing from Effexor (or another antidepressant) may include:

- Flu-like symptoms
- Headache

- Imbalance
- Nausea
- Sweating
- Restlessness
- High blood pressure
- Abnormal sensory disturbances
- Dizziness

Psychiatric or cognitive symptoms may also occur like nightmares or excessive dreams, problems with concentration, anxiety or worsening of depression, confusion, or even psychosis.

Electric shock-like sensations and short-lived [narcolepsy](#) or cataplexy (loss of muscle tone triggered by a strong emotion) may also occur as a result of discontinuing Effexor.

## Electric Shock-Like Sensations

In terms of the electric shock-like sensations, people often describe the sensations as a very brief, repetitive electric shock-like feeling, often like a "brain shiver" or brain zap." Sometimes it remains confined to the brain or head, and in other cases, it begins there but spreads out to other parts of the body.

Some people claim they can trigger the sensation by moving their eyes, and others say they experience disorientation, tinnitus (a ringing in the ears), vertigo, and/or lightheadedness at the same time.

## Are These Sensations Dangerous?

There is no current evidence that suggests these electric sensations represent any danger. However, these sensations can cause patients to become alarmed or worry, and they can also happen frequently enough to disrupt daily life or quality of life.

## A Word From Verywell

The key to [preventing antidepressant withdrawal syndrome](#) (and preventing these uncomfortable sensations from occurring) is to take your medication as prescribed and undergo any dose changes under the close guidance of your doctor.

Sources:

Harvey BH, Slabbert FN. [New insights on the antidepressant discontinuation syndrome](#). *Hum Psychopharmacol*. 2014 Nov;29(6):503-16

Sabljić V, Ružić K, Rakun R. Venlafaxine withdrawal syndrome. *Psychiatr Danub*. 2011 Mar;23(1):117-9.