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PSYCHIATRY

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PATIENT EDUCATION

Benztropine

Cogentin / Generic tablets and clinician-administered injection

A guide for adults taking benztropine.
Follow the directions on your prescription and your provider's recommendations.

WATCH FOR OVERHEATING | NOT FOR TARDIVE DYSKINESIA

Formulations: Tablets are used for ongoing treatment. An injection may be given by a clinician for urgent movement symptoms. The schedule depends on the reason for treatment.

What it is used for

Benztropine treats certain movement symptoms caused by antipsychotic medicines, such as stiffness, tremor, or acute muscle spasms. It is also used for some symptoms of Parkinson disease. It does not treat tardive dyskinesia and can make that condition worse.

How it works

It blocks acetylcholine receptors. Reducing acetylcholine activity can help restore the balance of movement signals, but it also affects sweating, saliva, vision, bowel function, and memory.

What to expect over time

An injection can relieve acute spasms quickly; tablets have a different time course. Your provider should periodically review whether you still need it, especially after an antipsychotic dose changes.

Taking your medication

- Follow your prescribed schedule rather than taking extra for any new movement.
- If you miss a dose, take it when you remember unless it is almost time for the next dose. Then skip it. Do not double a dose.
- Consult with your provider before stopping after regular use.
- Avoid overheating. Reduced sweating makes hot weather or strenuous exercise more hazardous.

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Side effects and safety

Possible side effects

- Dry mouth, constipation, or blurred vision
- Dizziness or a faster heartbeat
- Difficulty urinating
- Confusion or memory difficulty, especially in older adults

Keeping track of treatment

Some side effects resolve with time; others may require a change of medication. Discuss persistent or bothersome side effects with your provider.

Track the movement symptom being treated, bowel function, urination, vision, and mental clarity. Report new mouth or tongue movements rather than increasing benztropine.

If you take too much

For a suspected overdose, call Poison Control at **1-800-222-1222** immediately, even if you feel well. Call 911 for a seizure, collapse, trouble breathing, or inability to wake.

Before you start

Discuss glaucoma, urinary retention, prostate enlargement, bowel obstruction, severe constipation, heart problems, dementia, and heat intolerance.

Discuss pregnancy, pregnancy plans, and breastfeeding with your provider. Treatment decisions should consider both the medication and the condition being treated.

Medicines and interactions

Review all your medications with your provider, including over-the-counter medicines and supplements. Have new medications checked before taking them.

Other anticholinergic medicines—including some antidepressants, antihistamines, bladder medicines, and antipsychotics—can add confusion, constipation, and urinary problems. Alcohol and sedatives may increase impairment.

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Living with your treatment

When to get help

Emergency symptoms. Seek urgent care for inability to urinate, severe abdominal pain or swelling, painful red eyes with visual changes, or overheating with confusion. Call 911 for severe symptoms or collapse.

Prompt medical advice. Report worsening memory, hallucinations, persistent constipation, or new involuntary facial movements.

If you feel unsafe or have thoughts of self-harm, call 911 or go to an emergency department.

Your questions answered

Does it prevent every movement side effect?
No. Different movement disorders need different treatments. Benztropine may help stiffness or spasms while worsening tardive dyskinesia.

Will I need it indefinitely?
Not always. Review its continued benefit and side effects with your provider; the need may change when the underlying medication changes.

Everyday tips

Use regular dental care and discuss dry-mouth treatments.

Keep cool, drink fluids within your medical restrictions, and report reduced sweating.

Storage and safety

Keep medication in its labeled container, away from excess heat and moisture and out of reach of children and pets. Do not share it. Ask a pharmacy about disposal of unused medication.

Sources

MedlinePlus: Benztropine

Educational handout; does not replace your prescription or provider's recommendations.