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PSYCHIATRY

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PATIENT EDUCATION

Chlorpromazine

Generic tablets / Clinician-administered injection

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

RISE SLOWLY • AVOID ALCOHOL

PROTECT YOUR SKIN FROM SUN

Formulations: Oral tablets and injectable formulations have different uses and dosing. An injection is administered under clinical supervision.

What it is used for

Chlorpromazine treats psychotic disorders and manic symptoms. It also has uses outside psychiatry, including certain severe nausea and persistent hiccups. Your dose and treatment goals depend on the reason it was prescribed.

How it works

It blocks dopamine receptors and also affects histamine, acetylcholine, and blood-pressure-related receptors. These additional actions help explain sedation, dry mouth, constipation, and dizziness.

What to expect over time

Some symptoms improve earlier than others. Changes in hallucinations, mood, or organized thinking often develop over several weeks. Track practical goals, such as regular sleep and daily activities, and report side effects or limited benefit.

Taking your medication

- Follow your scheduled or specifically prescribed as-needed instructions.
- 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.
- Rise slowly and avoid alcohol. Do not drive when sleepy or dizzy.
- Use sunscreen and protective clothing because skin may become more sensitive to sunlight.

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Side effects and safety

Possible side effects

- Drowsiness or dizziness on standing
- Dry mouth, constipation, or blurred vision
- Stiffness, tremor, or restlessness
- Weight gain or hormone-related changes

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.

Expect periodic checks of weight, blood pressure, blood sugar, cholesterol, and movement symptoms. Some changes, such as higher blood sugar, may occur before you feel different.

Report new mouth, tongue, face, or limb movements. Tardive dyskinesia is a movement disorder that can persist after medication is stopped.

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 diabetes, heart-rhythm problems, fainting, seizures, low blood counts, swallowing difficulties, and kidney or liver disease. Antipsychotics increase the risk of death in older adults with dementia-related psychosis.

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

Discuss glaucoma, urinary retention, and severe constipation.

Medicines and interactions

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

Alcohol, opioids, sleeping pills, and sedating allergy medicines can increase impairment. Blood-pressure medicines may add lightheadedness or falls.

Medicines that affect heart rhythm or dopamine signaling need particular review. Some antibiotics, antifungals, and seizure medicines change antipsychotic levels.

Anticholinergic medicines add bowel and urinary risks. Parkinson medicines can work against its dopamine-blocking effects. Tell your provider if tobacco smoking changes.

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CHLORPROMAZINE / 03

Living with your treatment

When to get help

Emergency symptoms. Get emergency care for fever with severe muscle stiffness and confusion, a seizure, fainting with an irregular heartbeat, or trouble breathing. Fever and stiffness can signal neuroleptic malignant syndrome, a rare but serious reaction.

Prompt medical advice. Report sudden neck, jaw, or eye spasms, new involuntary movements, jaundice, fever, or severe constipation. Breathing or swallowing difficulty with a spasm needs emergency care.

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

Your questions answered

Can I stop when I feel better?
Consult with your provider. Continuing treatment may prevent symptoms from returning. Abrupt stopping can cause withdrawal symptoms or a relapse.

What if I cannot sit still?
An inner urge to keep moving can be akathisia, a medication side effect. Tell your provider promptly; it can be mistaken for worsening anxiety.

Everyday tips

Stand up slowly. Avoid driving until you know how the medication affects alertness and coordination.

Stay hydrated and take breaks in hot weather. Some antipsychotics interfere with temperature regulation.

Discuss appetite or weight changes early, and keep scheduled monitoring visits.

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: Chlorpromazine

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