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PSYCHIATRY

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PATIENT EDUCATION

Propranolol

Inderal / InnoPran XL / Generic formulations

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

FOLLOW YOUR PRESCRIBED SCHEDULE | DO NOT SUDDENLY STOP DAILY USE

Formulations: Immediate-release tablets or solution and extended-release capsules have different schedules. Long-acting formulations are not simple milligram-for-milligram substitutes for short-acting use.

What it is used for

Propranolol treats several cardiovascular conditions and helps prevent migraine or reduce tremor. Psychiatric uses such as performance anxiety or medication-related restlessness are off-label.

How it works

It blocks beta-adrenergic receptors, reducing effects of adrenaline on the heart and other tissues. It can reduce a racing pulse or tremor, but does not directly resolve the thoughts driving anxiety.

What to expect over time

Physical symptoms may improve after a dose, while migraine or cardiovascular goals need longer follow-up. If prescribed for an event, review timing and tolerability before an important performance.

Taking your medication

- Follow the prescribed scheduled or as-needed plan and any pulse or blood-pressure hold instructions.
- Do not repeat early because anxiety remains.
- Do not double a missed scheduled dose.
- After regular use, do not stop suddenly; gradual reduction may be needed to avoid heart-related complications.

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Side effects and safety

Possible side effects

- Fatigue, dizziness, or reduced exercise tolerance
- Slow pulse or low blood pressure
- Cold hands or feet
- Sleep disturbance or vivid dreams

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.

Check pulse and blood pressure as directed. Report wheezing, fainting, marked exercise intolerance, or worsening mood.

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

Asthma, certain heart blocks, a very slow pulse, or cardiogenic shock can rule out treatment. Discuss diabetes because propranolol can mask some warning signs of low blood sugar.

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 medicines that slow the heart, including verapamil or diltiazem, can add serious effects. Clonidine withdrawal requires coordinated management.

Review insulin or diabetes medicines, other blood-pressure drugs, and medicines that alter propranolol levels.

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PROPRANOLOL / 03

Living with your treatment

When to get help

Emergency symptoms. Get emergency care for severe wheezing, collapse, chest pain, or a very slow pulse with weakness or fainting.

Prompt medical advice. Report recurring dizziness, new breathing difficulty, swollen legs, or unusual fatigue.

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

Your questions answered

Will I stay completely clear-headed?
Some people feel tired or dizzy. Learn your response before driving or an important event.

Does it treat all anxiety symptoms?
It may help physical symptoms. Persistent fear, avoidance, or generalized anxiety may need another treatment approach.

Everyday tips

Follow your own pulse and blood-pressure thresholds.

Tell surgical and emergency teams that you take a beta blocker.

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

Official prescribing information: propranolol
MedlinePlus: propranolol

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