Jeffrey Panko NP
PSYCHIATRY

Jeffrey Panko, PMHNP-BC
Phone 646-549-4694 | Fax 646-558-4238
JMPankoNP@JeffreyPanko.com
jeffreypanko.com

PATIENT EDUCATION

Thioridazine

Generic oral tablets / Restricted-use antipsychotic

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

ORAL TABLETS | HEART AND MEDICINE CHECKS MATTER

Formulations: Oral tablets require careful dose selection, interaction review, and cardiac monitoring. It is not a routine first-choice antipsychotic.

What it is used for

Thioridazine is reserved for schizophrenia when adequate trials of other antipsychotics have not provided sufficient benefit or tolerability. Its potentially fatal heart-rhythm risk limits use.

How it works

It blocks dopamine receptors and affects other receptors involved in sedation and anticholinergic effects. It can prolong the heart's QT interval in a dose-related manner.

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

- Take exactly as prescribed and never add extra doses.
- 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.
- Keep ECG and blood-test appointments.
- Have every new medicine checked before use, including OTC allergy or cold remedies.

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Side effects and safety

Possible side effects

- Drowsiness or low blood pressure
- Dry mouth, constipation, or blurred vision
- Urinary difficulty
- Weight, sexual, or movement 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.

An ECG and potassium assessment are needed before treatment and repeated as clinically indicated. Report changes in night or color vision because retinal injury can occur.

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.

Long QT, certain rhythm disorders, low potassium, or impaired CYP2D6 metabolism can rule out treatment. Discuss family history of sudden death.

Medicines and interactions

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

CYP2D6 inhibitors such as fluoxetine or paroxetine, and other clearance inhibitors including fluvoxamine or propranolol, can create dangerous exposure.

Other QT-prolonging medicines are contraindicated. Diuretics or severe vomiting and diarrhea can increase risk through electrolyte changes.

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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. Contact your provider promptly for new involuntary movements, trouble swallowing, severe restlessness, or symptoms of high blood sugar such as unusual thirst and frequent urination.

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

Official prescribing information: thioridazine
MedlinePlus: thioridazine

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