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PATIENT EDUCATION

# Trifluoperazine

Generic tablets / Former Stelazine brand

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

ORAL TABLETS | ANXIETY USE HAS STRICT LIMITS

**Formulations:** Oral tablets are taken at the prescribed times. Anxiety use has stricter dose and duration limits than schizophrenia treatment.

## What it is used for

Trifluoperazine treats schizophrenia. U.S. labeling also permits limited short-term treatment of nonpsychotic anxiety when appropriate, but it is not a routine first choice for anxiety.

## How it works

It blocks dopamine receptors. This can reduce psychotic symptoms but also causes movement-related and prolactin-related effects.

## 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 consistently and follow the indication-specific schedule.
- 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.
- Do not take extra tablets for anxiety or agitation.
- Consult with your provider before stopping.

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# Side effects and safety

## Possible side effects

- Stiffness, tremor, restlessness, or slowed movement
- Drowsiness or dizziness
- Dry mouth, constipation, or blurred vision
- Breast, menstrual, or sexual 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.

## 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.

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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.** Seek same-day care for sudden neck, jaw, or eye spasms. Call 911 if breathing or swallowing is affected. Report new involuntary movements, infection signs, or severe constipation.

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: trifluoperazine
MedlinePlus: trifluoperazine

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