

Benzotropine

Cogentin · historical brand name

For certain kinds of stiffness, shaking or muscle spasms. The type of movement problem matters.

From Jeffrey Panko, PMHNP-BC's education collection ·

Draft for review · Clinical content has not been revalidated for this website.

WATCH FOR OVERHEATING

NOT FOR TARDIVE DYSKINESIA

mAChR means muscarinic acetylcholine receptor. Blocking it can help movement but also cause side effects.

What it is used for

May help stiffness, shaking and slowed movement caused by some medicines. It is also used with other treatment for Parkinson disease.

An injection can treat sudden, painful muscle spasms called acute dystonia. It is given by a healthcare professional.

How it works

Blocks the action of a messenger called acetylcholine in parts of the brain involved in movement.

It does not help every unwanted movement. It can worsen tardive dyskinesia, such as repeated lip-smacking or tongue movements. Tell your team about new movements.

What to expect over time

SUDDEN SPASMS

An injection may help within minutes. Breathing trouble is an emergency.

TABLETS

Some medication-related symptoms improve over a day or two; response varies.

REGULAR REVIEW

Use the lowest helpful dose. Ask when your team will reassess whether you still need it.

Taking your medication

Follow your prescription exactly. Some people take it at bedtime; others have divided doses. Your schedule depends on the movement problem.

Do not take extra for restlessness or anxiety, and do not raise the dose on your own.

If you miss a tablet, take it when remembered unless the next dose is near. Skip then; never double up.

When to get help

Call 911: trouble breathing or swallowing from a spasm, collapse, seizure, or inability to wake up.

Get urgent help: high fever, overheating with little sweating, severe confusion, or fever with marked muscle stiffness.

Seek prompt care: inability to urinate, severe belly pain or swelling, a painful red eye, sudden vision change, or a very fast heartbeat.

Early side effects

Dry mouth, constipation, blurred vision, nausea, dizziness and sleepiness can occur. Tell your team if they interfere with daily life rather than simply putting up with them.

Other effects to discuss

Report forgetfulness, confusion, hallucinations, falls or worsening movements. More medicine is not always the answer. Older adults can be especially sensitive to these effects.

What to keep track of

Keep track of the movement symptom, bowel movements, urination, vision and alertness. Your team may check your pulse and memory. Routine drug-level blood tests are not usually needed.

Before you start

Mention glaucoma, trouble urinating or an enlarged prostate, constipation or bowel blockage, a fast heartbeat, memory problems, hallucinations, and kidney or liver disease. Discuss pregnancy or breastfeeding if relevant. Bring a complete medicine list, including products bought without a prescription.

Medicines & interactions

Allergy, sleep and bladder products

Some add the same drying, constipating and confusing effects. Check before adding diphenhydramine or similar products.

Mental-health medicines

Some antidepressants and antipsychotics add heat, bowel or memory risks. Your team should review the combination, not just each drug alone.

Alcohol and sedatives

These can worsen sleepiness and poor coordination. Avoid alcohol and check other sedating medicines with your prescriber.

Everyday tips

Stay cool in hot weather. Limit heavy activity in heat and take cooling breaks.

Sip water if allowed, use sugar-free gum for dry mouth and keep up dental care.

Ask about a bowel plan; report persistent constipation promptly.

Use a simple symptom and dose log to help judge whether treatment is worthwhile.

Your questions, answered

Can I stop when I feel better?

Check first. After regular use, your team may lower the dose gradually. Suddenly stopping can bring back movement symptoms or cause sweating, nausea and other withdrawal effects.

Can I drive?

Wait until you know how it affects alertness and vision. Do not drive when sleepy, dizzy, confused or unable to see clearly.

What if I take too much?

Call Poison Control right away: 1-800-222-1222. Do not wait for symptoms and do not make yourself vomit. Call 911 for severe symptoms.

Does this replace my other medicine?

No. It treats certain movement symptoms, not the underlying mental-health condition. Your prescriber may adjust the medicine causing those symptoms; do not make that change yourself.

Storage & safety

Keep in the original child-resistant container at room temperature, away from heat and moisture, out of children's and pets' reach. Do not share it. Ask your pharmacist about safe disposal of unused tablets.

About this information

For general information only; not a substitute for individualized medical advice. This sheet does not cover every risk or interaction. Ask your prescriber or pharmacist before changing how you take this medication.

Sources

1. <https://dailymed.nlm.nih.gov/dailymed/drugInfo.cfm?setid=50c61b1d-49d6-37f2-e063-6294a90a0590>
 2. <https://medlineplus.gov/druginfo/meds/a682155.html>
 3. <https://www.nswtag.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/1.5-Deprescribing-Guide-for-Anticholinergic-drugs-for-Parkinsonism.pdf>
-

Educational inclusion does not mean this medication or its indications are treated at this practice. Review the guide for your exact product with your prescriber or pharmacist.

thoughtscape NP Psychiatry
Jeffrey Panko, PMHNP-BC