

Modafinil

Provigil • wakefulness-promoting medicine

Helps reduce excessive sleepiness so daily life is easier to manage. It works alongside treatment for your sleep disorder.

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

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

ADULTS • SCHEDULE IV

TABLETS: 100, 200 mg

The diagram shows dopamine reuptake inhibition; the complete wake-promoting mechanism is not established.

What it is used for

Treats excessive sleepiness from narcolepsy, obstructive sleep apnea or shift-work disorder.

For sleep apnea, keep using prescribed CPAP or other airway treatment. For an off-label use, ask what specific benefit you are tracking.

How it works

Modafinil affects brain signaling involved in staying awake. The full mechanism is still being studied; it is not a replacement for sleep.

It is related to armodafinil, but the doses are not interchangeable. More medicine does not always mean better alertness or function.

What to expect over time

THE FIRST DOSES

You may feel more awake the same day. Headache, nausea or trouble sleeping may appear.

AROUND TWO WEEKS

Review the benefit and side effects. Feeling wired, unusually energetic or unlike yourself needs attention.

ONGOING

Keep regular follow-up. If fatigue returns, review the cause rather than raising the dose yourself.

Taking your medication

For narcolepsy or sleep apnea, take the prescribed dose once each morning. For shift-work disorder, take it about 1 hour before work.

Take with or without food. Food may ease nausea but delay the effect. Taking it near your planned sleep can keep you awake.

Do not change the dose or schedule yourself. Ask a pharmacist before splitting your tablets. Modafinil does not replace enough sleep.

When to get help

New rash: stop and call right away. Blisters, mouth sores, peeling skin, fever, jaundice or swelling need urgent care, even after stopping.

Call 911: trouble breathing, face/throat swelling, severe chest pain, collapse or immediate self-harm danger. For crisis support, call/text 988.

Urgent advice: hallucinations, extreme energy, aggression or new suicidal thoughts. Suspected overdose? Call Poison Control: 1-800-222-1222 now.

Early side effects

Headache, nausea, upset stomach, dizziness, diarrhea, dry mouth, nervousness or insomnia may occur. Report effects that disrupt your day.

Other effects to discuss

Track appetite, weight, sleep and mood. Report a racing heart, ongoing anxiety or needing extra doses; do not assume these changes are harmless.

What to keep track of

Keep BP, pulse and sleep checks. Do not drive if sleepy or until you know the medicine's effects.

Before you start

Tell your team about prior modafinil/armodafinil rash, heart or BP problems, liver/kidney disease, substance-use history, depression, bipolar disorder or psychosis. Review pregnancy plans, contraception, all medicines and supplements before starting.

Medicines & interactions

Birth control

Pills, patches, rings and implants can become less reliable. Arrange effective alternative/backup contraception during treatment and for 1 month afterward. Confirm your exact method, including any IUD.

Prescription medicines

Warfarin may need closer blood tests. Levels of diazepam, phenytoin, propranolol, some antidepressants and cyclosporine can change. Flag MAO inhibitors and check every new medicine.

Caffeine and other stimulants

Coffee, energy drinks or stimulant medicines can add insomnia, jitteriness or a racing heart. Review your intake rather than adding more to stay awake.

Alcohol and other products

Avoid alcohol. Review sedating medicines and supplements. Modafinil may affect some erectile-dysfunction medicines; ask before adjusting them.

Everyday tips

Protect time for enough good-quality sleep.

Continue CPAP or other prescribed sleep treatment.

Track a daily goal, such as fewer unintended naps.

Arrange a safe ride when sleepy; do not push through.

Your questions, answered

What if I miss a dose?

Ask your pharmacist if the timing is unclear, especially with rotating shifts. Avoid a late catch-up dose near planned sleep. Never double; returning sleepiness can make driving unsafe.

Can I stop when I feel better?

Agree on a plan first. Many people do not need a taper, but sleepiness may return and dependence is possible. Keep contraception precautions for 1 month afterward. Serious rash or allergy means stop and seek urgent help.

What about pregnancy?

Discuss pregnancy plans early. Studies raise concern for birth defects, so other options may be preferred. Contact your prescriber promptly if pregnant; do not wait for the next routine appointment.

Can I breastfeed?

Small studies found R-modafinil in milk, but information about babies is limited. Discuss another treatment or a plan to watch your baby's feeding, sleep and growth.

Storage & safety

Store at room temperature, locked away from children, pets and others. Never share; this medicine can be misused and cause dependence. Ask your pharmacy about take-back disposal.

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=0391f182-1958-9fef-a944-53b229ce99e7>
 2. <https://dailymed.nlm.nih.gov/dailymed/medguide.cfm?setid=0391f182-1958-9fef-a944-53b229ce99e7>
 3. <https://medlineplus.gov/druginfo/meds/a602016.html>
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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.

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