

Pitolisant

Wakix • wakefulness and cataplexy treatment

Helps with narcolepsy symptoms through the brain's histamine system. Keep protecting time for enough sleep.

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

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

NARCOLEPSY • AGE 6+

TABLETS: 4.45, 17.8 mg • NOT CONTROLLED

H3 is a histamine receptor, not a reuptake transporter. The full clinical mechanism is not established.

What it is used for

Treats excessive daytime sleepiness or cataplexy in adults and children age 6 and older who have narcolepsy.

Cataplexy means sudden brief muscle weakness. Track these attacks separately from sleepiness. Other uses need a separate discussion.

How it works

Histamine helps the brain stay awake. Pitolisant acts at H3 receptors to reduce a signal that holds back histamine release.

This is different from taking a sedating antihistamine. It may help symptoms, but does not cure narcolepsy or replace sleep.

What to expect over time

FIRST FEW WEEKS

Start low and follow your team's step-by-step schedule. Nausea, anxiety or insomnia may appear.

UP TO EIGHT WEEKS

Improvement may take time. Do not increase your dose just because the first few days feel unchanged.

ONGOING

Track sleepiness, muscle-weakness attacks and daily functioning. Keep visits to review benefit and safety.

Taking your medication

Take your prescribed dose each morning when you wake up, with or without food. Keep the timing consistent.

Your dose is raised gradually. Children's schedules differ from adults', and kidney/liver problems or other medicines may mean a lower limit.

Use the tablet strength and number on your prescription. Ask before splitting or crushing; do not change the dose or add an extra tablet yourself.

When to get help

Get prompt help: a fast or irregular heartbeat, feeling faint, new hallucinations or a major change in mood or behavior.

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

Too much medicine? Call Poison Control at 1-800-222-1222 now. Do not wait for symptoms or try to manage an overdose at home.

Early side effects

Nausea, headache, trouble sleeping, anxiety, dry mouth or stomach discomfort can occur. Tell your team if they are severe or do not settle.

Other effects to discuss

Track appetite, weight and sleep. Report ongoing irritability, unusual dreams, racing heart or worsening symptoms rather than raising the dose yourself.

What to keep track of

Keep heart checks if advised. Avoid driving while sleepy; feeling more alert does not by itself make driving safe.

Before you start

Tell your team about fainting, abnormal heart rhythm, long QT, low potassium/magnesium, kidney or liver disease, seizures, mental-health changes and any allergy to pitolisant. Review pregnancy, breastfeeding and every medicine or supplement before starting.

Medicines & interactions

Heart-rhythm medicines

Some medicines for heart rhythm, nausea, infection or mental health can add to QT risk. Have your pharmacist check combinations before you take them.

Antidepressants and other medicines

Fluoxetine, paroxetine and bupropion can raise pitolisant levels. Some seizure medicines can lower them. Starting or stopping these may require a prescriber-led dose change.

Allergy and sleep products

Sedating antihistamines, such as diphenhydramine, may work against pitolisant. Ask before using an over-the-counter allergy medicine or sleep aid.

Birth control

Hormonal contraception may become less reliable. Arrange an effective nonhormonal method during treatment and for at least 21 days afterward; confirm your exact method with your team.

Everyday tips

Keep a steady sleep schedule and enough sleep time.

Track sleep attacks and cataplexy in a simple diary.

Plan school/work supports with your care team.

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

Your questions, answered

What if I miss a dose?

Skip it. Take the next dose the following morning at your usual time. Do not take two doses together or catch up late in the day.

Can I stop if I feel better?

Talk with your prescriber first. Sleepiness or cataplexy may return, and a gradual change may be useful. Keep nonhormonal contraception for at least 21 days after the last dose.

What about pregnancy?

Tell your prescriber promptly if pregnant or planning pregnancy. Human safety information is limited. Ask about treatment options and the Wakix pregnancy registry.

Can I breastfeed?

A small study found low amounts in breast milk, but effects on babies are not established. Weigh treatment and feeding options with your team rather than assuming it is proven safe.

Storage & safety

Keep in its closed original container at room temperature, away from heat, moisture, children and pets. Never share. 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=8daa5562-824e-476c-9652-26ceef3d4b0e>
 2. <https://medlineplus.gov/druginfo/meds/a619055.html>
-

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