

# Thioridazine

Mellaril / former US brand

What to know about your medicine, with heart safety at the center of the plan.

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

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

## ORAL TABLETS

## HEART AND MEDICINE CHECKS MATTER

A reserved-use medicine. Check with your prescriber or pharmacist before any medicine is started or stopped.

### What it is used for

Thioridazine treats schizophrenia when other antipsychotics have not helped enough or caused unacceptable side effects.

It is used selectively because it can cause a dangerous, sometimes fatal, heart rhythm. Ask why its benefits outweigh its risks for you.

### How it works

It changes dopamine signaling to help reduce psychotic symptoms. It can also cause sleepiness, dizziness and movement or hormone effects.

The diagram does not predict your response. Some target effects remain unconfirmed; heart monitoring is needed regardless.

### What to expect over time

#### BEFORE STARTING

An ECG and potassium test help check heart safety. Your team must review other medicines.

#### OVER SEVERAL WEEKS

Some symptoms may improve early. Fuller improvement can take several weeks.

#### DURING TREATMENT

Keep heart and blood-test appointments, especially when the dose changes.

### Taking your medication

Follow your own label for dose and timing. Do not take extra tablets or change the dose yourself.

Avoid alcohol. Check before using sleep aids, allergy remedies, supplements or other medicines.

Stand up slowly. Do not drive or use machinery until your team says it is safe.

## When to get help

Emergency help: fainting, a seizure, severe breathing trouble, or an irregular heartbeat with chest pain or marked dizziness.

Emergency help: fever with stiff muscles or confusion, or an erection lasting four hours. Seek advice before another dose for a serious reaction.

Call promptly: new palpitations or dizziness, vision changes, fever/sore throat, unusual movements, trouble urinating or severe constipation.

## Early side effects

Sleepiness, dry mouth, blurry vision, constipation and dizziness can occur. Ask about a safe plan to manage them rather than adding remedies yourself.

## Other effects to discuss

Tell your team about restlessness, stiffness, weight changes, breast milk production, missed periods or sexual problems. Some movement effects can persist.

## What to keep track of

Your team will review symptoms, movement, weight, blood pressure and blood tests. Report changes in night or color vision. Vomiting, diarrhea or dehydration can upset body salts and may require extra checks.

## Before you start

Tell your prescriber about heart disease, fainting, slow pulse, long QT or unexplained sudden death in your family, seizures, glaucoma, urinary or bowel problems, liver/kidney disease, low white blood cells and past severe drug reactions. Mention pregnancy, nursing, all medicines and any known CYP2D6 slow-metabolism result.

## Medicines & interactions

### Some antidepressants

Fluoxetine, paroxetine and bupropion can raise thioridazine levels. Fluvoxamine also interferes with clearance. These need a different treatment plan, not self-adjusted dosing.

### Heart and other medicines

Propranolol, pindolol and medicines that lengthen the heart's QT interval must not be combined. Have every new prescription checked.

### Body salts and dehydration

Some water pills and laxatives lower potassium. Ongoing vomiting or diarrhea can also increase rhythm risk. Call your team for advice.

### Sedating or drying medicines

Opioids, sleep aids and some allergy/bladder medicines can worsen sedation, constipation or urinary trouble. A pharmacist can check safer choices.

## Everyday tips

Bring an up-to-date medication list to every appointment, including dental care and surgery.

Track one or two symptoms you want to improve and side effects that interfere with your day.

Use reminders for tablets and tests. Tell your team if taking the medicine is becoming difficult.

Avoid overheating; the medicine can reduce sweating. Ask for a practical plan for hot weather.

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## Your questions, answered

### What if I miss a dose?

Take it when remembered unless the next dose is almost due. Then skip it. Never double up. Ask for advice after several missed doses.

### Can I stop if I feel better?

Plan changes with your prescriber. Sudden stopping can bring symptoms back. Serious reactions need urgent medical advice.

### What about pregnancy or nursing?

Contact your prescriber promptly so you can plan treatment and feeding safely. Do not stop on your own.

### What if I take too much?

Call Poison Control at 1-800-222-1222 in the US. Call 911 for collapse, seizure, trouble breathing or inability to wake. Do not wait for symptoms.

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## Storage & safety

Keep tablets in their original closed container, away from light, heat and moisture and out of children's reach. Follow pack storage instructions. Ask a pharmacist about medicine take-back; never share tablets.

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## A final reminder

Mellaril is no longer marketed as a US brand. Existing diagram labels retain their recorded evidence limits.

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### 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.

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## Sources

1. <https://dailymed.nlm.nih.gov/dailymed/lookup.cfm?setid=1fd16a99-e856-4a37-9dae-c443714fac14>
  2. <https://medlineplus.gov/druginfo/meds/a682119.html>
  3. <https://www.poisonhelp.org/help>
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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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