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perphenazine

Generic Name: perphenazine (per FEN a zeen)

Brand Name: *Trilafon*

What is perphenazine?

Perphenazine is an anti-psychotic medicine in a group of drugs called phenothiazines (FEEN-oh-THYE-a-zeens). It works by changing the actions of chemicals in your brain.

Perphenazine is used to treat psychotic disorders such as schizophrenia. It is also used to control severe nausea and vomiting.

Perphenazine may also be used for purposes not listed in this medication guide.

What is the most important information I should know about perphenazine?

You should not use perphenazine if you have liver disease, brain damage, bone marrow depression, a blood cell disorder, or if you are also using large amounts of alcohol or medicines that make you sleepy.

Call your doctor at once if you have twitching or uncontrollable movements of your eyes, lips, tongue, face, arms, or legs. These could be early signs of dangerous side effects.

What should I discuss with my healthcare provider before taking perphenazine?

You should not use this medicine if you are allergic to any phenothiazine (perphenazine, chlorpromazine, prochlorperazine, promethazine, thioridazine, Compazine, Phenergan, Mellaril, Thorazine, and others), or if you have:

- liver disease;
- brain damage;
- bone marrow depression;
- a blood cell disorder (such as low platelets or low red or white blood cell counts); or
- if you are also using large amounts of alcohol or medicines that make you sleepy.

Perphenazine is not approved for use in psychotic conditions related to dementia. Perphenazine may increase the risk of death in older adults with dementia-related conditions.

To make sure perphenazine is safe for you, tell your doctor if you have:

- severe or untreated depression;
- heart disease or high blood pressure;
- kidney disease;
- severe asthma, emphysema, or other breathing problem;
- a history of seizures;
- Parkinson's disease;
- past or present breast cancer;
- adrenal gland tumor (pheochromocytoma);
- enlarged prostate or urination problems;
- low levels of calcium in your blood (hypocalcemia);
- glaucoma; or

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- if you have ever had a serious side effect while using perphenazine or another phenothiazine.

Tell your doctor if you will be exposed to extreme heat or cold, or to insecticide poisons while you are taking perphenazine.

Tell your doctor if you are pregnant or plan to become pregnant while using this medication.

Taking antipsychotic medication during the last 3 months of pregnancy may cause problems in the newborn, such as withdrawal symptoms, breathing problems, feeding problems, fussiness, tremors, and limp or stiff muscles. However, you may have withdrawal symptoms or other problems if you stop taking your medicine during pregnancy. **If you become pregnant while taking perphenazine, do not stop taking it without your doctor's advice.**

Perphenazine can pass into breast milk and may harm a nursing baby. Tell your doctor if you are breast-feeding a baby.

How should I take perphenazine?

Follow all directions on your prescription label. Your doctor may occasionally change your dose to make sure you get the best results.

Do not take this medicine in larger amounts than recommended, or for longer than prescribed. High doses or long-term use of perphenazine can cause a serious muscle movement disorder that may not be reversible. The longer you take perphenazine, the more likely you are to develop a serious movement disorder. The risk of this side effect is higher in older adults, especially women.

While using perphenazine, you may need frequent blood tests.

If you need surgery, tell the surgeon ahead of time that you are using perphenazine. You may need to stop using the medicine for a short time.

Do not stop using perphenazine suddenly after long-term use, or you could have unpleasant withdrawal symptoms. Ask your doctor how to avoid withdrawal symptoms when you stop using perphenazine.

Store at room temperature away from moisture, heat, and light.

What happens if I miss a dose?

Take the missed dose as soon as you remember. Skip the missed dose if it is almost time for your next scheduled dose. Do not take extra medicine to make up the missed dose.

What happens if I overdose?

Seek emergency medical attention or call the Poison Help line at 1-800-222-1222. **An overdose of perphenazine can be fatal.**

What should I avoid while taking perphenazine?

This medication may impair your thinking or reactions. Be careful if you drive or do anything that requires you to be alert. Avoid getting up too fast from a sitting or lying position, or you may feel dizzy. Get up slowly and steady yourself to prevent a fall.

Avoid drinking alcohol. It can increase some of the side effects of perphenazine.

Avoid exposure to sunlight or tanning beds. Perphenazine can make you sunburn more easily. Wear protective clothing and use sunscreen (SPF 30 or higher) when you are outdoors.

Perphenazine side effects

Get emergency medical help if you have any of these **signs of an allergic reaction**: hives; difficult breathing; swelling of your face, lips, tongue, or throat.

Call your doctor at once if you have any of these signs of a serious movement disorder:

- tremors or shaking in your arms or legs;
- uncontrolled muscle movements in your face (chewing, lip smacking, frowning, tongue movement, blinking or eye movement); or
- any new or unusual muscle movements you cannot control.

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Also call your doctor at once if you have:

- feeling restless, jittery, or agitated;
- confusion, unusual thoughts or behavior;
- seizure (convulsions);
- extreme drowsiness or dizziness, feeling like you might pass out;
- severe bloating or stomach cramps;
- little or no urinating;
- slow heart rate, weak pulse, weak or shallow breathing;
- sudden weakness or ill feeling, fever, chills, sore throat, mouth sores, red or swollen gums, trouble swallowing; or
- severe nervous system reaction--very stiff (rigid) muscles, high fever, sweating, fast or uneven heartbeats.

Older adults may be more likely to have side effects from this medication.

Common side effects may include:

- mild dizziness or drowsiness;
- blurred vision, headache;
- sleep problems (insomnia), strange dreams;
- loss of appetite, vomiting, diarrhea, constipation;
- increased sweating or urination;
- dry mouth or stuffy nose;
- breast swelling or discharge; or
- mild itching or skin rash.

This is not a complete list of side effects and others may occur. Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects. You may report side effects to FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.

See also: Side effects (in more detail)

Perphenazine dosing information

Usual Adult Dose for Psychosis:

For moderately disturbed, nonhospitalized patients:

Tablets: 4 to 8 mg three times daily. The dose should be reduced as soon as possible to the minimum effective dose.

For hospitalized psychotic patients:

Tablets: 8 to 16 mg two to three times daily. Avoid dosages in excess of 64 mg daily.

Concentrate: 8 to 16 mg two to four times daily. Avoid dosages in excess of 64 mg daily.

Prolonged administration of doses exceeding 24 mg daily should be reserved for hospitalized patients or patients under continued observation for early detection and management of adverse reactions.

For patients requiring prompt control or in whom oral administration is not feasible:

5 mg by deep IM injection. May repeat every six hours, not to exceed a daily dosage of 15 mg in ambulatory patients or 30 mg in hospitalized patients. If necessary, an initial 10 mg IM dose may be administered for symptoms of severe psychosis.

Usual Adult Dose for Nausea/Vomiting:

For severe nausea and vomiting:

Tablets: 8 to 16 mg daily in divided doses, up to 24 mg if necessary. Early dose reduction is desirable.

Prolonged administration of doses exceeding 24 mg daily should be reserved for hospitalized patients or patients under continued observation for early detection and management of adverse reactions.

For patients requiring prompt control or in whom oral administration is not feasible:

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5 mg by deep IM injection, may repeat every six hours. If necessary, an initial 10 mg IM dose may be administered for severe symptoms. In general, higher dosages should only be given to hospitalized patients.

Usual Pediatric Dose for Psychosis:

>12 years:

For moderately disturbed, nonhospitalized patients:

Tablets: 4 mg three times daily. The dose should be reduced as soon as possible to the minimum effective dose.

For hospitalized psychotic patients:

Tablets: 8 mg two times daily.

For patients requiring prompt control or in whom oral administration is not feasible:

5 mg by deep IM injection.. May repeat every six hours.

Usual Pediatric Dose for Nausea/Vomiting:

>12 years:

For severe nausea and vomiting:

Tablets: 8 mg daily in divided doses. Early dose reduction is desirable.

For patients requiring prompt control or in whom oral administration is not feasible:

5 mg by deep IM injection. May repeat every six hours.

What other drugs will affect perphenazine?

Taking this medicine with other drugs that make you sleepy can worsen this effect. Ask your doctor before taking perphenazine with a sleeping pill, narcotic pain medicine, muscle relaxer, or medicine for anxiety, depression, or seizures.

Many drugs can interact with perphenazine. This includes prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal products. Not all possible interactions are listed here. Tell your doctor about all your medications and any you start or stop using during treatment with perphenazine.

Where can I get more information?

- Your pharmacist can provide more information about perphenazine.

Remember, keep this and all other medicines out of the reach of children, never share your medicines with others, and use this medication only for the indication prescribed.

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