Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Diphenhydramine (Systemic

This information from UpToDate® Lexidrug™ explains what you need to know about this medication, including what it's used for, how to take it, its side effects, and when to call your healthcare provider.

Brand Names: US

Allergy Childrens [OTC] [DSC]; Allergy Relief Childrens [OTC]; Allergy Relief [OTC]; Anti-Hist Allergy [OTC]; Banophen [OTC]; Benadryl Allergy Childrens [OTC]; Benadryl Allergy Extra Str [OTC]; Benadryl Allergy Ultratabs [OTC]; Benadryl Allergy [OTC]; Complete Allergy Relief [OTC]; CuRELIEF [OTC]; Dimetane Allergy Relief Ex St [OTC]; Dimetane Allergy Relief [OTC]; Diphen [OTC]; Diphenhist [OTC] [DSC]; FT Allergy Relief Childrens [OTC]; FT Allergy Relief [OTC]; FT Nighttime Sleep Aid [OTC]; FT Sleep-Aid Maximum Strength [OTC]; Geri-Dryl [OTC]; GoodSense Allergy Relief [OTC]; GoodSense Sleep Aid [OTC] [DSC]; GoodSense Sleep-Aid Max Str [OTC]; GoodSense SleepTime [OTC] [DSC]; M-Dryl [OTC]; MAXAllergy Kids [OTC]; Naramin [OTC]; Nighttime Sleep Aid [OTC]; PediaCare Childrens Allergy [OTC]; Pharbedryl [OTC]; Siladryl Allergy [OTC] [DSC]; Simply Sleep [OTC]; Sleep Tabs [OTC]; Total Allergy Medicine [OTC]; Total Allergy [OTC]; ZzzQuil [OTC]

Brand Names: Canada

Diphenist

What is this drug used for?

- It is used to relieve coughing.
- It is used to ease allergy signs.
- It is used to help motion sickness.
- It is used to treat signs like Parkinson's disease caused by other health

problems.

- It is used to treat sleep problems.

What do I need to tell my doctor BEFORE I take this drug?

- If you are allergic to this drug; any part of this drug; or any other drugs, foods, or substances. Tell your doctor about the allergy and what signs you had.
- If you are breast-feeding or plan to breast-feed. You may need to avoid breast-feeding.
- If the patient is a premature baby or a newborn. Do not give this form of this drug to a premature baby or a newborn.

This is not a list of all drugs or health problems that interact with this drug.

Tell your doctor and pharmacist about all of your drugs (prescription or OTC, natural products, vitamins) and health problems. You must check to make sure that it is safe for you to take this drug with all of your drugs and health problems. Do not start, stop, or change the dose of any drug without checking with your doctor.

What are some things I need to know or do while I take this drug?

All products:

- Tell all of your health care providers that you take this drug. This includes your doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and dentists.
- Do not take more than what your doctor told you to take. Taking more than you are told may raise your chance of severe side effects.
- Do not take this drug for longer than you were told by your doctor.
- Avoid driving and doing other tasks or actions that call for you to be alert until you see how this drug affects you.
- Do not use with other products that have diphenhydramine.

- Avoid drinking alcohol while taking this drug.
- Talk with your doctor before you use marijuana, other forms of cannabis, or prescription or OTC drugs that may slow your actions.
- If you are 60 or older, use this drug with care. You could have more side effects.
- If the patient is a child, use this drug with care. The risk of some side effects may be higher in children.
- Tell your doctor if you are pregnant or plan on getting pregnant. You will need to talk about the benefits and risks of using this drug while you are pregnant.

Products for sleep problems:

- This drug is not for use in children younger than 12 years of age. However, the doctor may decide the benefits of taking this drug outweigh the risks. If your child has been given this drug, ask the doctor for information about the benefits and risks. Talk with the doctor if you have questions about giving this drug to your child.

All other products:

- Different brands of this drug may be for use in different ages of children. Talk with the doctor before giving this drug to a child.
- Do not use to make a child sleepy. Talk with the doctor.

What are some side effects that I need to call my doctor about right away?

WARNING/CAUTION: Even though it may be rare, some people may have very bad and sometimes deadly side effects when taking a drug. Tell your doctor or get medical help right away if you have any of the following signs or symptoms that may be related to a very bad side effect:

- Signs of an allergic reaction, like rash; hives; itching; red, swollen, blistered, or peeling skin with or without fever; wheezing; tightness in the chest or

throat; trouble breathing, swallowing, or talking; unusual hoarseness; or swelling of the mouth, face, lips, tongue, or throat.

- Severe dizziness or passing out.
- Change in balance.
- Feeling less alert.

What are some other side effects of this drug?

All drugs may cause side effects. However, many people have no side effects or only have minor side effects. Call your doctor or get medical help if any of these side effects or any other side effects bother you or do not go away:

- Feeling dizzy or sleepy.
- Thickening of mucus in nose or throat.
- Feeling nervous and excitable.
- Upset stomach or throwing up.

These are not all of the side effects that may occur. If you have questions about side effects, call your doctor. Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects.

You may report side effects to your national health agency.

You may report side effects to the FDA at 1-800-332-1088. You may also report side effects at https://www.fda.gov/medwatch.

How is this drug best taken?

Use this drug as ordered by your doctor. Read all information given to you. Follow all instructions closely.

All oral products:

- Take with or without food. Take with food if it causes an upset stomach.

Products for sleep problems:

- Take this drug at bedtime.

Chewable tablets and oral-disintegrating tablets:

- Chew well or let dissolve in the mouth.
- If you have phenylketonuria (PKU), talk with your doctor. Some products have phenylalanine.

Oral strip:

- Place oral strip on your tongue and let dissolve.

All liquid products:

- Measure liquid doses carefully. Use the measuring device that comes with this drug. If there is none, ask the pharmacist for a device to measure this drug.
- If you have phenylketonuria (PKU), talk with your doctor. Some products have phenylalanine.

Liquid (suspension):

- Shake well before use.

Injection:

- It is given as an injection into a muscle or vein.
- This drug may cause tissue damage if it is given into the skin or into the fatty part under the skin. Talk with the doctor.

What do I do if I miss a dose?

Products for sleep problems:

- This drug is taken on an as needed basis. Do not take more often than told by the doctor.

All other oral products:

- If you take this drug on a regular basis, take a missed dose as soon as you think about it.
- If it is close to the time for your next dose, skip the missed dose and go back to your normal time.
- Do not take 2 doses at the same time or extra doses.
- Many times this drug is taken on an as needed basis. Do not take more often than told by the doctor.

Injection:

- Call your doctor to find out what to do.

How do I store and/or throw out this drug?

All oral products:

- Store at room temperature protected from light. Store in a dry place. Do not store in a bathroom.

All liquid products:

- Do not freeze.

Liquid (suspension):

- Throw away any part not used after 8 weeks.

Injection:

- If you need to store this drug at home, talk with your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist about how to store it.

All products:

- Keep all drugs in a safe place. Keep all drugs out of the reach of children and pets.
- Throw away unused or expired drugs. Do not flush down a toilet or pour down a drain unless you are told to do so. Check with your pharmacist if you have questions about the best way to throw out drugs. There may be drug take-back programs in your area.

General drug facts

- If your symptoms or health problems do not get better or if they become worse, call your doctor.
- Do not share your drugs with others and do not take anyone else's drugs.
- Some drugs may have another patient information leaflet. If you have any questions about this drug, please talk with your doctor, nurse, pharmacist, or other health care provider.
- Some drugs may have another patient information leaflet. Check with your pharmacist. If you have any questions about this drug, please talk with your doctor, nurse, pharmacist, or other health care provider.
- If you think there has been an overdose, call your poison control center or get medical care right away. Be ready to tell or show what was taken, how much, and when it happened.

Consumer Information Use and Disclaimer

This generalized information is a limited summary of diagnosis, treatment, and/or medication information. It is not meant to be comprehensive and should be used as a tool to help the user understand and/or assess potential diagnostic and treatment options. It does NOT include all information about conditions,

treatments, medications, side effects, or risks that may apply to a specific patient. It is not intended to be medical advice or a substitute for the medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment of a health care provider based on the health care provider's examination and assessment of a patient's specific and unique circumstances. Patients must speak with a health care provider for complete information about their health, medical questions, and treatment options, including any risks or benefits regarding use of medications. This information does not endorse any treatments or medications as safe, effective, or approved for treating a specific patient. UpToDate, Inc. and its affiliates disclaim any warranty or liability relating to this information or the use thereof. The use of this information is governed by the Terms of Use, available at https://www.wolterskluwer.com/en/know/clinical-effectiveness-terms.

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If you have questions or concerns, contact your healthcare provider. A member of your care team will answer Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Outside those hours, you can leave a message or talk with another MSK provider. There is always a doctor or nurse on call. If you're not sure how to reach your healthcare provider, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit www.mskcc.org/pe to search our virtual library.

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