Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Haloperidol

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

Haldol Decanoate [DSC]

Brand Names: Canada

TEVA-Haloperidol

Warning

- There is a higher chance of death in older adults who take this drug for mental problems caused by dementia. Most of the deaths were linked to heart disease or infection. This drug is not approved to treat mental problems caused by dementia.

What is this drug used for?

- It is used to treat schizophrenia.
- It is used to treat Tourette's syndrome.
- It is used to treat problems with how one acts.
- It is used to treat mood problems.
- It may be given to you for other reasons. Talk with the doctor.

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 have Parkinson's disease or dementia.
- If you have a health problem or take a drug that makes you very sleepy.
- If you have any of these health problems: Heart problems like heart failure or a certain type of chest pain (unstable angina), high blood pressure, slow or abnormal heartbeat (like heart block or long QT on ECG), low thyroid function, or a very narrow heart valve (aortic stenosis).
- If you have had a recent heart attack.
- If you have ever had seizures.
- If you are taking a drug to treat seizures.
- If you are taking any drugs that can cause a certain type of heartbeat that is not normal (prolonged QT interval). There are many drugs that can do this. Ask your doctor or pharmacist if you are not sure.

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?

- Tell all of your health care providers that you take this drug. This includes your doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and dentists.
- Avoid driving and doing other tasks or actions that call for you to be alert until you see how this drug affects you.

- To lower the chance of feeling dizzy or passing out, rise slowly if you have been sitting or lying down. Be careful going up and down stairs.
- Have your blood work and other lab tests checked as you have been told by your doctor. Some people may also need to have heart rhythm checked with an ECG.
- If you have high blood sugar (diabetes), you will need to watch your blood sugar closely.
- Avoid alcohol, marijuana or other forms of cannabis, or prescription or OTC drugs that may slow your actions.
- Heat stroke has happened in people taking this drug. Be careful in hot weather and during physical activity.
- Drink lots of noncaffeine liquids unless told to drink less liquid by your doctor.
- If you have been taking this drug on a regular basis and you stop it all of a sudden, you may have signs of withdrawal. Do not stop taking this drug all of a sudden without calling your doctor. Tell your doctor if you have any bad effects.
- An unsafe heartbeat that is not normal (long QT on ECG) has happened with this drug. Sudden deaths have rarely happened in people taking this drug. Talk with the doctor.
- If you also take lithium, talk with your doctor. A few people who were taking this drug along with lithium have had very bad side effects and brain problems that did not go away.
- Dizziness, sleepiness, and feeling less stable may happen with this drug. These may lead to falling, which can cause broken bones or other health problems.
- This drug may affect fertility. Fertility problems may lead to not being able to get pregnant or father a child. If you plan to get pregnant or father a child, talk with your doctor before taking this drug.
- Older adults with dementia taking drugs like this one have had a higher number of strokes. Sometimes these have been deadly. This drug is not

approved to treat mental problems caused by dementia.

- If you are 65 or older, use this drug with care. You could have more side effects.
- Tell your doctor if you are pregnant, plan on getting pregnant, or are breast-feeding. You will need to talk about the benefits and risks to you and the baby.
- Taking this drug in the third trimester of pregnancy may lead to side effects or withdrawal in the newborn.

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.
- Signs of high or low blood pressure like very bad headache or dizziness, passing out, or change in eyesight.
- Signs of liver problems like dark urine, tiredness, decreased appetite, upset stomach or stomach pain, light-colored stools, throwing up, or yellow skin or eyes.
- Signs of low sodium levels like headache, trouble focusing, memory problems, feeling confused, weakness, seizures, or change in balance.
- Trouble controlling body movements, twitching, change in balance, trouble swallowing or speaking.
- Shakiness, trouble moving around, or stiffness.
- Fast or abnormal heartbeat.
- Chest pain that is new or worse.

- Trouble passing urine.
- Feeling very tired or weak.
- Any unexplained bruising or bleeding.
- Change in eyesight.
- Hallucinations (seeing or hearing things that are not there).
- Seizures.
- Mental, mood, or behavior changes that are new or worse.
- Not able to control eye movements.
- Change in sex interest.
- Enlarged breasts, nipple discharge, not able to get or keep an erection, or menstrual changes.
- Painful erection (hard penis) or an erection that lasts for longer than 4 hours.
- Low white blood cell counts have happened with drugs like this one. This may lead to a higher chance of infection. Rarely, infections have been deadly. Tell your doctor if you have ever had a low white blood cell count. Call your doctor right away if you have signs of infection like fever, chills, or sore throat.
- Tell your doctor if you have signs of high or low blood sugar like breath that smells like fruit, dizziness, fast breathing, fast heartbeat, feeling confused, feeling sleepy, feeling weak, flushing, headache, unusual thirst or hunger, passing urine more often, shaking, or sweating.
- Some people may get a severe muscle problem called tardive dyskinesia. This problem may lessen or go away after stopping this drug, but it may not go away. The risk is greater with diabetes and in older adults, especially older females. The risk is greater with longer use or higher doses, but it may also occur after short-term use with low doses. Call your doctor right away if you have trouble controlling body movements or problems with your tongue, face, mouth, or jaw like tongue sticking out, puffing cheeks, mouth puckering, or chewing.

- A very bad and sometimes deadly health problem called neuroleptic malignant syndrome (NMS) may happen. Call your doctor right away if you have any fever, muscle cramps or stiffness, dizziness, very bad headache, confusion, change in thinking, fast heartbeat, heartbeat that does not feel normal, or are sweating a lot.
- Some people have gotten pneumonia when taking this drug. Sometimes, this has been deadly. Call your doctor right away if you have fever, chest pain, cough, shortness of breath, or wheezing.

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 sleepy.
- Anxiety.
- Dry mouth.
- More saliva.
- Constipation, diarrhea, stomach pain, upset stomach, throwing up, or decreased appetite.
- Headache.
- Restlessness.
- Trouble sleeping.

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.
- Keep taking this drug as you have been told by your doctor or other health care provider, even if you feel well.

Oral solution:

- Measure liquid doses carefully. Use the measuring device that comes with this drug.
- You may take this drug without mixing, or you may mix with food or drink as you have been told.

Short-acting injection:

- It is given as a shot into a muscle.
- It may be given as a shot into a vein.

Long-acting injection:

- It is given as a shot into a muscle.

What do I do if I miss a dose?

All oral products:

- 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.

All injection products:

- 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.

Oral solution:

- Do not freeze.

All injection products:

- 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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