Haloperidol (ha loe per’ i dole)

URL of this page: http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/druginfo/meds/a682180.html

IMPORTANT WARNING:

Studies have shown that older adults with dementia (a brain disorder that affects the ability to remember, think clearly, communicate, and perform daily activities and that may cause changes in mood and personality) who take antipsychotics (medications for mental illness) such as haloperidol have an increased chance of death during treatment. Haloperidol is not approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for the treatment of behavior problems in older adults with dementia. Talk to the doctor who prescribed this medication if you, a family member, or someone you care for has dementia and is taking haloperidol. For more information, visit the FDA website: http://www.fda.gov/Drugs

Why is this medication prescribed?

Haloperidol is used to treat psychotic disorders (conditions that cause difficulty telling the difference between things or ideas that are real and things or ideas that are not real). Haloperidol is also used to control motor tics (uncontrollable need to repeat certain body movements) and verbal tics (uncontrollable need to repeat sounds or words) in adults and children who have Tourette's disorder (condition characterized by motor or verbal tics). Haloperidol is also used to treat severe behavioral problems such as explosive, aggressive behavior or hyperactivity in children who cannot be treated with psychotherapy or with other medications. Haloperidol is in a group of medications called conventional antipsychotics. It works by decreasing abnormal excitement in the brain.

How should this medicine be used?

Haloperidol comes as a tablet and concentrated liquid to take by mouth. It is usually taken two or three times a day. Take haloperidol at around the same times every day. Follow the directions on your prescription label carefully, and ask your doctor or pharmacist to explain any part you do not understand. Take haloperidol exactly as directed. Do not take more or less of it or take it more often than prescribed by your doctor.

Your doctor will probably start you on a low dose of haloperidol and gradually increase your dose. Your doctor may decrease your dose once your condition is controlled. Be sure to tell your doctor how you are feeling during your treatment with haloperidol.

Haloperidol may help control your condition, but will not cure it. Continue to take haloperidol even if you feel well. Do not stop taking haloperidol without talking to your doctor. Your doctor will probably decrease your dose gradually. If you suddenly stop taking haloperidol, you may experience difficulty controlling your movements.

Other uses for this medicine

Haloperidol is also used to treat confusion and difficulty thinking and understanding that is caused by severe physical or mental illness. Talk to your doctor about the possible risks of using this medication for your condition.

This medication may be prescribed for other uses; ask your doctor or pharmacist for more information.

What special precautions should I follow?

Before taking haloperidol,

- tell your doctor and pharmacist if you are allergic to haloperidol or any other medications.
- tell your doctor and pharmacist what prescription and nonprescription medications, vitamins, nutritional supplements, and herbal products you are taking or plan to take. Be sure to mention any of the following: amiodarone (Cordarone); anticoagulants (blood thinners); antihistamines; disopyramide (Norpace); dofetilide (Tikosyn); epinephrine (Epinen); erythromycin (E.E.S., E-Mycin, Erythrocin); ipratropium (Atrovent); lithium (Eskalith, Lithobid); medications for anxiety, depression, irritable bowel disease, mental illness, motion sickness, Parkinson's disease, seizures, ulcers, or urinary problems; methyl-dopa; moxifloxacin (Avelox); narcotic medications for pain; pimozide (Orap); procainamide; quinidine; rifampin (Rifater, Rifadin); sedatives; sotalol (Betapace, Betapace AF); sparfloxacin (Zagam) (not available in the US); sleeping pills; thioridazine; and tranquilizers. Your doctor may need to change the doses of your medications or monitor you carefully for side effects.
- tell your doctor if you have or have ever had Parkinson's disease (PD; a disorder of the nervous system that causes difficulties with movement, muscle control, and balance). Your doctor will probably tell you not to take haloperidol.
- tell your doctor if you or anyone in your family has or has ever had prolonged QT syndrome (condition that increases the risk of developing an irregular heartbeat that may cause loss of consciousness, or sudden death). Also tell your doctor if you have or have ever had breast cancer; bipolar disorder (condition that causes episodes of depression, episodes of mania, and other abnormal moods); citrullinemia (condition that causes build-up of ammonia in the blood); an abnormal electroencephalogram (EEG; a test that records electrical activity in the brain); seizures; an irregular heartbeat; low levels of calcium or magnesium in your blood; chest pain; or heart or thyroid disease. Also tell your doctor if you have ever had to stop taking a medication for mental illness due to severe side effects.
- tell your doctor if you are pregnant, especially if you are in the last few months of your pregnancy, or if you plan to become pregnant or are breast-feeding. If you become pregnant while taking haloperidol, call your doctor. Haloperidol may cause problems in newborns following delivery if it is taken during the last months of pregnancy.
- if you are having surgery, including dental surgery, tell the doctor or dentist that you are taking haloperidol.
- you should know that this medication may make you drowsy and may affect your thinking and movements. Do not drive a car or operate machinery until you know how this medication affects you.
- ask your doctor about the safe use of alcohol during your treatment with haloperidol. Alcohol can make the side effects of haloperidol worse.

What special dietary instructions should I follow?

Unless your doctor tells you otherwise, continue your normal diet.

What should I do if I forget a dose?

Take the missed dose as soon as you remember it. However, if it is almost time for the next dose, skip the missed dose and continue your regular dosing schedule. Do not take a double dose to make up for a missed one.

What side effects can this medication cause?
Haloperidol may cause side effects. Tell your doctor if any of these symptoms are severe or do not go away:

- drowsiness
- dry mouth
- increased saliva
- blurred vision
- loss of appetite
- constipation
- diarrhea
- heartburn
- nausea
- vomiting
- difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep
- blank facial expression
- uncontrollable eye movements
- unusual, slowed, or uncontrollable movements of any part of the body
- restlessness
- agitation
- nervousness
- mood changes
- dizziness
- headache
- breast enlargement or pain
- breast milk production
- missed menstrual periods
- decreased sexual ability in men
- increased sexual desire
- difficulty urinating

If you experience any of the following symptoms, call your doctor immediately:

- fever
- muscle stiffness
- confusion
• fast or irregular heartbeat
• sweating
• decreased thirst
• neck cramps
• tongue that sticks out of the mouth
• tightness in the throat
• difficulty breathing or swallowing
• fine, worm-like tongue movements
• uncontrollable, rhythmic face, mouth, or jaw movements
• seizures
• eye pain or discoloration
• decreased vision, especially at night
• seeing everything with a brown tint
• rash
• yellowing of the skin or eyes
• erection that lasts for hours

Haloperidol may cause other side effects. Tell your doctor if you have any unusual problems while you are taking this medication.

If you experience a serious side effect, you or your doctor may send a report to the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) MedWatch Adverse Event Reporting program online [at http://www.fda.gov/Safety/MedWatch] or by phone [1-800-332-1088].

What storage conditions are needed for this medicine?

Keep this medication in the container it came in, tightly closed, and out of reach of children. Store it at room temperature and away from excess heat and moisture (not in the bathroom). Protect the liquid from light and do not allow it to freeze. Throw away any medication that is outdated or no longer needed. Talk to your pharmacist about the proper disposal of your medication.

In case of emergency/overdose

In case of overdose, call your local poison control center at 1-800-222-1222. If the victim has collapsed or is not breathing, call local emergency services at 911.

Symptoms of overdose may include:
• unusual, slowed, or uncontrollable movements of any part of the body
• stiff or weak muscles
• slowed breathing
• sleepiness
• loss of consciousness

What other information should I know?

Keep all appointments with your doctor.

Do not let anyone else take your medication. Ask your pharmacist any questions you have about refilling your prescription.

It is important for you to keep a written list of all of the prescription and nonprescription (over-the-counter) medicines you are taking, as well as any products such as vitamins, minerals, or other dietary supplements. You should bring this list with you each time you visit a doctor or if you are admitted to a hospital. It is also important information to carry with you in case of emergencies.

Brand names

• Haldol®

† These branded products are no longer on the market and only generic alternatives are available.

Last Revised - 05/16/2011

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