

Flupentixol decanoate (pron. flew-pen-ticks-ol deck-anne-o-eight)

What is flupentixol decanoate used for?

Flupentixol decanoate (which is also spelt flupenthixol and is also known as Depixol[®]) is mainly used to help treat the symptoms of psychosis, schizophrenia or mania. It is known as a 'neuroleptic', 'antipsychotic' or wrongly as a 'major tranquilliser'. Flupentixol decanoate is made as a long-acting or depot injection. Flupentixol is also made as tablets.

What is the usual dose of flupentixol decanoate?

The usual dose of flupentixol decanoate is around 20-100mg every two weeks.

How is flupentixol decanoate given?

Flupentixol decanoate is given by an injection into the buttock muscles or the thigh. This is usually every two weeks but can be every one, two, three or four weeks. A long-acting injection or depot injection is injected into a muscle and releases flupentixol slowly over a couple of weeks or so. This can take the place of taking tablets every day.

What are the alternatives to flupentixol decanoate?

There are many other antipsychotics, talking therapies and treatments for psychosis, schizophrenia and mania. See our "Handy charts" to help you compare the medicines, how they work and their side effects.

How long will flupentixol decanoate take to work?

This will depend on what you are having it for but probably for several years. Please look at the "Handy charts" for more help and advice.

How long will I need to keep having flupentixol decanoate for?

This will depend on what you are having it for but probably for at least several years. Please look at the "Handy charts" for more help and advice.

Is flupentixol decanoate addictive?

Flupentixol decanoate is not addictive.

Can I stop having flupentixol decanoate suddenly?

It is unwise to stop having it suddenly, even if you feel better. Your symptoms can return if treatment is stopped too early. This may occur some weeks or even many months after the medicine has been stopped. When the time comes, you should stop flupentixol decanoate by a gradual reduction in the dose over several weeks. You should discuss this fully with your doctor.

What should I do if I forget to get a dose of flupentixol decanoate?

Contact your nurse or doctor. You may need a slightly different dose next time to make sure your symptoms do not come back.

Can I drink alcohol while I am having flupentixol decanoate?

If you drink alcohol while having flupentixol decanoate it may make you feel more sleepy. This is particularly important if you need to drive or operate machinery. You must seek advice on this.

Will flupentixol decanoate affect my other medication?

Flupentixol decanoate has only a few interactions with other medicines:

- Flupentixol can cause more sleepiness if taken with alcohol or other sedative medicines e.g. benzodiazepines (e.g. temazepam, diazepam, lorazepam), zopiclone, zolpidem
- Flupentixol can have more side effects (such as dry mouth, blurred vision, constipation and difficulty passing urine) if taken with tricyclics (e.g. imipramine, lofepramine) or anticholinergics (e.g. procyclidine)
- Flupentixol can have more side effects if taken with other antipsychotics or metoclopramide
- Flupentixol can also affect the heart (so be careful with amiodarone, disopyramide, clarithromycin)
- You should have no problems with "The Contraceptive Pill" and flupentixol decanoate.

Not all of these interactions happen in everyone. Some of these medicines can still be used together but you will need to follow your doctor's instructions carefully. There are other possible drug interactions.

What sort of side-effects might occur if I am having flupentixol decanoate?

The table below will show you some of the main side effects you might get from flupentixol decanoate.

Side effect	What happens	What to do about it
COMMON (more than about 1 in 10 people might get these)		
Sleepiness	Feeling sleepy or sluggish. It can last for a few hours after having a dose.	Don't drive or use machinery. It should wear off.
Movement disorders (extra-pyramidal side effects)	Having shaky hands. Your eyes and tongue may move on their own. You may feel very restless, or stiff.	It is not usually dangerous but is a well known side effect. If it is distressing or worries you, tell your doctor. He or she may be able to give you a medicine for it e.g. an anticholinergic.
Pain where the injection is given	Pain in the muscle	A warm bath can help, as can exercise. Make sure you have the injection in a different site to the last time.
LESS COMMON (less than about 1 in 10 people might get these)		
Postural hypotension	Low blood pressure - this can make you feel dizzy.	Try not to stand up too quickly. If you feel dizzy, don't drive.
Headache	When your head is painful.	Try paracetamol. Your pharmacist will be able to advise if this is safe to take with any other medicines you may be taking.
Akathisia	Feeling more on edge or restless. You may sweat a lot more.	Try and relax by taking deep breaths. Wear loose fitting clothes.
Raised prolactin (hyperprolactinaemia)	It can affect breasts (including milk being leaked) and irregular or no periods in women, or cause impotence and chest changes in men.	It can be very distressing. Discuss with your doctor when you next see him or her as it may possibly even affect your bones if prolactin is raised for a long time.
Constipation	When you want to poop but can't (the opposite of diarrhoea). You can't pass a motion.	Make sure you eat enough fibre, cereal or fruit. Make sure you are drinking enough fluid, keep active and get some exercise e.g. walking. If this does not help, ask your doctor or pharmacist for a mild laxative.
RARE (less than about 1 in 100 people might get these)		
Blurred vision	Things look fuzzy and you can't focus your eyes properly.	Don't drive. See your doctor if you are worried.
Weight gain	Eating more and putting on weight.	A diet full of vegetables and fibre may help prevent weight gain. Ask for advice.
Skin rashes	Blotches seen on the skin.	See your doctor now.

Do not be worried by this list of side effects. Some people get no side effects at all and others may get some effects that are not listed in this table. If you think you might have a side effect to your medicine, you should ask your doctor, nurse or pharmacist. If you want to know more, go to our website for links to other websites with more information.

Will I need a blood test if I am having flupentixol decanoate?

You should sometimes need to have a blood test to check on some possible side effects e.g. prolactin levels, blood sugar

Can I drive or cycle while I am having flupentixol decanoate?

You may feel a bit sleepy at first when having flupentixol decanoate. You should be careful as it may slow down your reaction times. Until this wears off, or you know how flupentixol decanoate affects you, do not drive or operate machinery.

The small print: This leaflet is to help you understand about your medicine. You should also read the manufacturer's Patient Information Leaflet (PIL). You may find lots more on the internet but beware as internet-based information is not always accurate. Do not share medicines with anyone else. Go to our website for fuller answers to these and many other questions e.g. driving, women's health, how it works, doses and interactions, and about the conditions. The "Handy charts" will help you compare the main medicines for each condition, how they work and their side effects.