

Fluphenazine decanoate (pron. flew-fen-a-zeen deck-anne-o-eight)

What is fluphenazine decanoate used for?

Fluphenazine decanoate (also known as Modecate[®]) is mainly used to help treat psychosis, which can be a symptom of many conditions e.g. schizophrenia. It is one of a group of medicines known as antipsychotics or neuroleptics. It is made as a long-acting depot injection.

What is the usual dose of fluphenazine decanoate?

The usual dose of fluphenazine decanoate is around 25-100mg every two to four weeks.

How is fluphenazine decanoate given?

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

What are the alternatives to fluphenazine decanoate?

This will depend on what you are having it for. There are many other antipsychotics, talking therapies and treatments for psychosis. See our website and "Handy chart" to help you compare the medicines, how they work and their side effects.

How long will fluphenazine decanoate take to work?

Usually there will be some effect within a few days. The effect of each injection lasts for many weeks. However, this will depend on what you are having it for. Look at one of our "Handy charts" or on our website for more help and advice.

How long will I need to keep on fluphenazine decanoate for?

This will really depend on what you are having it for. If it is for schizophrenia, it might need to be many years to stop the symptoms coming back. Please look at one of our "Handy charts" or on our website for more help and advice.

Is fluphenazine decanoate addictive?

Fluphenazine decanoate is not addictive as such. If you have had it for a long time you may get some effects if you stop it. So-called "cholinergic rebound" can occur with fluphenazine decanoate e.g. feeling sick, tiredness, sweating, anxiety and insomnia. Because it is a long-acting injection this is unlikely to happen. The other main problem could be your symptoms coming back.

Can I stop fluphenazine decanoate suddenly?

It is unwise to stop it suddenly, even if you feel better. Your symptoms can return if treatment is stopped too early. This may occur many months after fluphenazine decanoate has been stopped e.g. 3-6 months later. When the time comes, you should come off fluphenazine decanoate by a gradual reduction in the dose over several months. You should discuss this fully with your doctor, nurse or pharmacist.

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

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

Will fluphenazine decanoate affect my other medication?

Fluphenazine decanoate has a few interactions with other medicines. Fluphenazine decanoate has many side effects. If it is taken with other medicines with the same side effects, then a combined effect can occur.

- Fluphenazine decanoate 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, orphenadrine)
- Antipsychotics can also effect the heart (so be careful with amiodarone, disopyramide, clarithromycin)
- Beta-blockers, fluoxetine, itraconazole or venlafaxine can increase the effects of fluphenazine decanoate
- Antacids (sometimes), carbamazepine, rifampicin or smoking can decrease the effect of fluphenazine decanoate
- Fluphenazine decanoate can be quite sedative, so be careful with sleeping tablets, tricyclics (e.g. dosulepin/dothiepin, imipramine), older antihistamines (e.g. promethazine), benzodiazepines (e.g. diazepam, lorazepam, temazepam), phenobarbital, melatonin or alcohol.
- You should have no problems with "The Contraceptive Pill" and fluphenazine 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 many other possible drug interactions.

Can I drink alcohol while I am on fluphenazine decanoate?

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

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

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

Side effect	What happens	What to do about it
COMMON (<i>more than about 1 in 10 people might get these</i>)		
Sleepiness	Feeling sleepy, drowsy or sluggish	Do not drive or use machinery. It may be possible to change your dose or medicine.
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.
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 and drink 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.
Dry mouth	Not enough saliva or spit.	Suck sugar-free boiled sweets. This should wear off after a few weeks. You may be able to get a mouth spray.
Blurred vision	Things look fuzzy and you can't focus your eyes properly.	Do not drive with blurred vision. This may wear off after a few weeks. See your doctor about this if it does not.
Weight gain	Eating more and putting on weight.	A diet full of vegetables and fibre may help prevent weight gain.
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.
FAIRLY COMMON (<i>less than about 1 in 10 people might get these</i>)		
Raised prolactin (hyper-prolactinaemia)	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.
Postural hypotension	Low blood pressure. You may feel faint when you stand up.	Try not to stand up too quickly. If you feel dizzy, don't drive. Discuss with your doctor when you next see him or her.
Palpitations	A fast heart beat.	It is not usually dangerous. It can be treated if it lasts a long time.
Sexual dysfunction	Finding it hard to have an orgasm. No desire for sex.	Discuss with your doctor.
UNCOMMON (<i>less than about 1 in 100 people might get these</i>)		
Photosensitivity	Going blotchy in the sun. Getting sunburnt easily.	Avoid direct sunlight or sun-lamps. Use a high factor sun block cream.
Skin rashes	Rashes 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 on fluphenazine decanoate?

Some people who need to have higher doses occasionally need a blood test e.g. to check on some possible side effects such as prolactin levels, blood sugar etc. You might also need your blood pressure tested.

Can I drive or cycle while I am on fluphenazine decanoate?

You may feel sleepy and have slower reactions at first when on fluphenazine decanoate. Until this wears off, or you know how fluphenazine 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.