

Pipotiazine palmitate (pron. pip-o-tyre-zeen palm-e-tate)

What is pipotiazine palmitate used for?

Pipotiazine palmitate (also known as Piportil[®]) 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 only made as a long-acting depot injection.

What is the usual dose of pipotiazine palmitate?

The usual dose of pipotiazine palmitate is around 25-50mg every two weeks, or 50-100mg every four weeks.

How is pipotiazine palmitate given?

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

What are the alternatives to pipotiazine palmitate?

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

How long will pipotiazine palmitate take to work?

Usually there will be some effect within a week or so. The effect of each injection lasts for very many weeks. Please look at one of the "Handy charts" for more advice on how long you might need to have it for before it works.

How long will I need to keep on pipotiazine palmitate 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.

Is pipotiazine palmitate addictive?

Pipotiazine palmitate 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 pipotiazine palmitate e.g. feeling sick, tiredness, sweating, anxiety and insomnia. Because it is a long-acting injection this is unlikely to happen.

Can I stop pipotiazine palmitate 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 pipotiazine palmitate has been stopped e.g. 3-6 months later. When the time comes, you should come off pipotiazine palmitate 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 have a dose of pipotiazine palmitate?

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 on pipotiazine palmitate?

If you drink alcohol while having pipotiazine palmitate 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.

Will pipotiazine palmitate affect my other medication?

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

- Pipotiazine palmitate can have more side effects (such as dry mouth, blurred vision, constipation and difficulty passing urine) if taken with tricyclics (e.g. imipramine, dosulepin) or anticholinergics (e.g. procyclidine)
- Antipsychotics can also affect the heart (so be careful with amiodarone, disopyramide, clarithromycin)
- Beta-blockers, fluoxetine, itraconazole or venlafaxine can increase the effects of pipotiazine palmitate
- Antacids (sometimes), carbamazepine, rifampicin or smoking can decrease the effect of pipotiazine palmitate
- Pipotiazine palmitate can be quite sedative, so be careful with sleeping tablets, tricyclics (e.g. dosulepin, imipramine, lofepramine), 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 pipotiazine

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.

What sort of side-effects might occur if I am having pipotiazine palmitate?

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

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 or sluggish	Do not drive or use machinery. It may be possible to change your dose or medicine.
Movement disorders (extra-pyramidal or Parkinsonian side effects)	Having shaky hands and feeling shaky. Your neck may twist back. Your eyes and tongue may move on their own. You may feel restless.	It is not usually dangerous and 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 drug, or perhaps try a different medicine.
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 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.
Dry mouth	Not enough saliva or spit.	Suck sugar-free gum or 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 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.
UNCOMMON (<i>less than about 1 in 100 people might get these</i>)		
Palpitations	A fast heart beat.	It is not usually dangerous. It can be treated if it lasts a long time.
Photosensitivity	Going blotchy in the sun. Getting sunburned easily	Avoid direct sunlight or sun-lamps. Use a high factor sun block cream.
Sexual dysfunction	Finding it hard to have an orgasm. No desire for sex.	Discuss with your doctor.
RARE (<i>less than about 1 in 100 people might get these</i>)		
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 having pipotiazine palmitate?

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, cycle or operate a boat while I am having pipotiazine palmitate?

You may feel sleepy and have slower reactions at first when having pipotiazine palmitate. Until this wears off, or you know how pipotiazine palmitate 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.