

# Paliperidone (pala-pera-done) Long Acting injection

## Patient Information - Hillmorton Hospital Pharmacy

### Why have I been prescribed paliperidone?

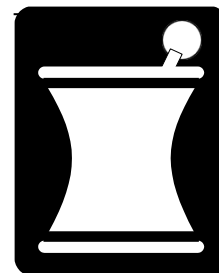
Paliperidone is used to treat schizophrenia, psychosis, bipolar affective disorder and similar conditions.

When people have schizophrenia, they may hear voices talking to them or about them. They may also become suspicious or paranoid. Some people also have problems with their thinking and feel that other people can read their thoughts. These are called “positive symptoms”. Paliperidone can help to relieve these symptoms.

Many people with schizophrenia also experience “negative symptoms”. They feel tired and lacking in energy and may become quite inactive and withdrawn. Paliperidone may help relieve these symptoms as well.

Paliperidone may also be prescribed for people who have had side effects such as unusual movements, muscle stiffness or shaking, with older types of antipsychotics.

Paliperidone is a close relative of the antipsychotic risperidone. Its side effect profile is similar but has the advantage of being able to be given as either a once a month injection or an injection once every three months. This means that people don't always have to remember to take tablets every day and may help keep people more mentally well.



### What exactly is paliperidone?

Paliperidone is one of a group of medicines used to treat schizophrenia and similar disorders. These illnesses are sometimes referred to as psychoses, hence the name given to this group of medicines, which is the “antipsychotics”. Paliperidone is a newer type of antipsychotic. It may help people who have negative symptoms and have not got much better on the older antipsychotics. The trade or brand name of one monthly paliperidone injection is ‘Invega Sustenna®’ and the three monthly paliperidone injection is ‘Invega Trinza®’.

### Is paliperidone safe for me?

It is usually safe to take paliperidone regularly as prescribed by your doctor, but it doesn't suit everyone.

Let your doctor know if any of the following apply to you, as extra care may be needed:

- If you have Parkinson's disease, or suffer from kidney or heart trouble.
- If you are pregnant, breast feeding, or wish to become pregnant.
- If you are elderly or have suffered a stroke.

## How is Paliperidone Long Acting Injection given?

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Paliperidone Long Acting Injection is given once a month or once every 3 months. It is administered into a large muscle where the medicine is released over the following weeks. The first two injections are usually administered into the muscle at the top of the arm. After that, you can decide where you would like it to be administered, either in the top of the arm or in the buttock.

If you have been on the one monthly paliperidone injection for at least four months, you may be able to be switched to the three monthly paliperidone injection. This has the advantage of only having to be given four times a year. You wouldn't expect to get any different side effects on the three-monthly injection compared with the one monthly injection.

Avoid massaging or rubbing the area where the injection was administered. Massaging or rubbing the injection site may cause the product to breakdown and enter the bloodstream too quickly. Only a trained nurse or doctor can give paliperidone injection.

## What will happen to me when I am given a paliperidone long acting injection?

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Antipsychotics do not work straight away and it may take several days or even weeks for some of the symptoms to reduce. To begin with, most people find that this medication will help them feel more relaxed and calmer. Later, after one or two weeks, other symptoms should begin to improve.

Some people may get some side effects before they start to feel any better. Most side effects should go away after a few weeks. Look at the table over the page. It tells you what to do if you get any of the usual side effects. Not everyone will get the side effects shown. There are many other possible side effects. Ask your pharmacist, doctor or nurse if you are worried about anything else that you think might be a side effect.

## Are there any medicines I should avoid or take care with?

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Always check with your doctor, nurse or pharmacist before starting a new medicine or purchasing medicines over the counter. Paliperidone when combined with some other medicines can cause unpleasant side effects.

## When I feel better, can I stop taking paliperidone?

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No. If you stop taking paliperidone, your original symptoms may return, but this may not be for three to six months after you stop. You and your doctor or prescriber should decide together when you can come off it. Most people need to be on paliperidone for quite a long time, sometimes years. This is not thought to be harmful. Paliperidone is not addictive.

## What about alcohol and marijuana?

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It is recommended that people taking paliperidone do not drink alcohol, use marijuana or other recreational drugs. When these are taken with paliperidone they can make some people drowsy.

They can lessen the effect of paliperidone and add to side effects such as feeling clumsy. This can lead to falls or accidents. As well as this, drinking alcohol, using marijuana or other recreational drugs often makes your psychosis worse or your mood unstable.

Once you are used to your paliperidone you can sometimes drink alcohol in small amounts without any harm. If you want a drink, try a glass of your normal drink and see how you feel. If it doesn't make you feel drowsy and clumsy, it is probably okay to drink small amounts. It pays to be very cautious because alcohol affects people in different ways, especially when they are taking medication. It is recognised that many road accidents occur because of mixing alcohol and marijuana with these medicines.

## What is the metabolic syndrome?

Antipsychotics can occasionally cause something called the metabolic syndrome. This is a combination of weight gain, raised cholesterol and raised blood sugars. Some antipsychotics are more likely to cause the metabolic syndrome than others.

When you start an antipsychotic, your weight, height and waist size will be measured. A recording of your heart called an ECG and a number of blood tests will be completed. These will be repeated several times during the first year that you are on an antipsychotic to ensure that you remain healthy. It is important when you start an antipsychotic that you eat a healthy diet and that you do some exercise. Talk to your case manager or doctor for advice about this. They may also offer to refer you to a dietitian.

SIDE EFFECTS	WHAT IT IS	WHAT SHOULD I DO IF THIS HAPPENS TO ME?
<b>Common</b>		
Headache	When your head is painful and pounding.	You can take paracetamol for this.
Postural Hypotension	A 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. This dizziness is not dangerous.
Raised Prolactin	Prolactin is a natural hormone we all have. High levels can affect periods in women or cause impotence in men. It may also cause breast tenderness and milk secretion, in men as well as women. Long term raised prolactin could cause osteoporosis.	Normally, raised prolactin is not of concern. If you are troubled by any of these symptoms, discuss them with your doctor or nurse at your next appointment.
Agitation	Being more on edge.	Discuss relaxation methods with your doctor or nurse.
<b>Fairly Common</b>		
Sexual Dysfunction	Lack of libido or no interest in sex. Inability to maintain an erection or have an orgasm.	Discuss this with your doctor or nurse when you next meet.

Drowsiness	Feeling sleepy or sluggish.	Don't drive or use machinery. As your treatment continues you should feel less drowsy.
Insomnia	Not being able to get to sleep at night.	Discuss this with your doctor or nurse.
<b>Uncommon</b>		
Akathisia	You feel restless, unable to feel comfortable unless you are moving.	Tell your doctor or nurse about this. It may be possible to change your medicine or dose or give you something to reduce these feelings.
Constipation	Feeling "bunched up" inside. You can't pass a bowel motion.	Eat more fibre, e.g. bran and vegetables. Do more walking. Make sure you drink plenty of fluid. A mild laxative from a pharmacy might help.
Movement Disorders	Feeling shaky or having a tremor. Your neck may twist back. Your eyes and tongue may move on their own.	It is not usually dangerous. If it is bad or it worries you, tell your doctor or nurse. It may be possible to change your dose, or to prescribe you something for it.
Weight Gain	Eating more and putting on weight.	Try and avoid putting on weight in the first place by eating a healthy diet full of vegetables and fibre and by doing physical activities such as walking. Avoid fatty foods like chocolate and chips, and high sugar foods such as cakes, sweets and fizzy drinks. Ask to see a dietitian if you need help with food choices.
<b>Rare</b>		
Blurred Vision	Things look fuzzy and you can't focus properly.	Don't drive. See your doctor or nurse if you are worried. It is unlikely that you will need glasses.
NMS	Neuroleptic Malignant Syndrome includes a high body temperature, muscle stiffness and being unable to move.	It usually occurs within a few weeks of a dose change. Contact your doctor or the emergency department immediately.
Skin Rashes	Blotches seen anywhere.	Contact your doctor or the emergency department immediately.
Dry mouth	Your mouth will feel dry and you will not produce much saliva (spit). Dry mouth can cause problems with speech, taste, chewing and swallowing. It can also increase the risk of getting dental decay and infection in your mouth.	To help prevent dental problems sip water regularly to moisten your mouth. Brush your teeth twice a day with fluoride toothpaste. Avoid sugary drinks and snacks between meals. Try sugar free chewing gum to stimulate saliva or discuss using an oral lubricant with your pharmacist or dentist.

**Remember, leaflets like this can only describe some of the effects of medication. You may also find other books or leaflets useful. If you have access to the internet, you may find a lot of information there as well. Be careful as internet-based information is not always accurate.**

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