

Risperidone (ris-perry-doan)

Patient Information - Hillmorton Hospital Pharmacy

Why have I been prescribed risperidone?

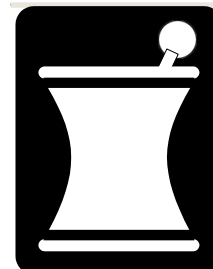
Risperidone is an antipsychotic used to treat schizophrenia and psychosis.

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”.

Risperidone 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 They feel tired and lacking in energy and may become quite inactive and withdrawn. Risperidone may help relieve these symptoms as well.

Risperidone is also used to treat mania, bipolar affective disorder, agitation in dementia, conduct disorder, irritability associated with autistic disorders and depression.

Risperidone may also be prescribed for people who have had side effects, such as strange movements and shaking, with older types of antipsychotics.



What exactly is risperidone?

Risperidone 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 “antipsychotics”. Risperidone is a newer type of antipsychotic called an atypical antipsychotic. It may help people who have negative symptoms and have not got better on the older antipsychotics.

Is risperidone safe to take?

It is usually safe to take risperidone 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 liver, 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 should I take risperidone and what should I do if I miss a dose?

Look at the label on your medicine; it should have all the necessary instructions on it. Follow this advice carefully. If you have any questions, speak to your pharmacist, doctor or nurse. Never change your dose without consulting with your doctor. If you forget a dose, take it as soon as you remember, as long as it is within a few hours of the usual time.

What will happen to me when I start taking risperidone?

Antipsychotics do not work straight away. 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.

You might 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 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?

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

When I feel better, can I stop taking risperidone?

No. If you stop taking risperidone, your original symptoms may return. This may not be for three to six months after you stop the drug.

You and your doctor should decide together when or if you can come off it. Most people need to be on risperidone for quite a long time, sometimes years. This is not thought to be harmful. Risperidone is not addictive.

What about alcohol and marijuana?

When you take risperidone try to avoid drinking alcohol, using marijuana, synthetic cannabis or other recreational drugs. Taking these with risperidone can make some people drowsy. They can lessen the effect of risperidone and add to side effects such as making you clumsy. This can lead to falls or accidents. Using recreational drugs can make your psychosis worse or your mood unstable.

Once you are used to your risperidone 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 medicines.

Many road accidents occur because of mixing alcohol, marijuana, synthetic cannabis or party pills with these medicines. Avoid driving in these circumstances.

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 heart test called an ECG and several blood tests will also 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 regular 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 IS IT?	WHAT SHOULD I DO IF THIS HAPPENS TO ME?
Common		
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 and generally goes away.
Raised Prolactin	Prolactin is a natural hormone that 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 may increase the risk of osteoporosis.	Discuss this with your doctor when you next meet.
Agitation or Anxiety	Being more on edge.	Discuss relaxation methods with your doctor.
Fairly Common		
Sexual Dysfunction	Lack of libido or no interest in sex. Inability to maintain an erection or have an orgasm.	Discuss this with your doctor when you next meet.
Drowsiness	Feeling sleepy or sluggish.	Avoid tasks you need to be alert for such as driving or using machines. Ask your doctor if you can take your risperidone at a different time of the day.
Insomnia	Not being able to get to sleep at night.	Discuss this with your doctor. You may be able to take your risperidone at a different time of the day.

SIDE EFFECT	WHAT IS IT?	WHAT SHOULD I DO IF THIS HAPPENS TO ME?
Uncommon		
Akathisia	You feel restless, unable to feel comfortable unless you are moving.	Tell your doctor about this. It may be possible to change your medicine or dose or give you something to reduce these feelings.
Constipation	Feeling “bunged 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 worries you, tell your doctor who may 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. Increase your physical activity. For example, go walking regularly. Avoid fatty foods like chocolate and crisps and high sugar foods such as cakes, sweets and fizzy drinks. Ask to see a dietitian if you need help with food choices.
Rare		
Blurred Vision	Things look fuzzy and you can’t focus properly.	Don’t drive. See your doctor if you are worried. You won’t 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 immediately. Keep cool, with fans or cool water.
Skin Rashes	Blotches seen anywhere.	Contact your doctor 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 the 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.

