

Uses

Haloperidol is used to treat certain mental/mood disorders (e.g., schizophrenia, schizoaffective disorders). This medicine helps you to think more clearly, feel less nervous, and take part in everyday life. It can also help prevent suicide in people who are likely to harm themselves. It also reduces aggression and the desire to hurt others. It can decrease negative thoughts and hallucinations. Haloperidol can also be used to treat uncontrolled movements and outbursts of words/sounds related to Tourette's syndrome. Haloperidol is also used for severe behavior problems in hyperactive children when other treatments or medications have not worked. Haloperidol is a psychiatric medication (antipsychotic-type) that works by helping to restore the balance of certain natural substances in the brain (neurotransmitters).

How to use Haloperidol

Take this medication by mouth with or without food, or as directed by your doctor. If you are using the liquid form of the medication, use the measuring dropper provided in the package to measure your dose. If you do not have the dropper, ask your pharmacist for a measured oral syringe so that your dose will be correct.

Dosage is based on your medical condition and response to therapy. Use this medication regularly in order to get the most benefit from it. To help you remember, use it at the same time(s) each day.

Do not stop taking this medication without consulting your doctor. Some conditions may become worse when the drug is suddenly stopped. Your dose may need to be gradually reduced.

Inform your doctor if your symptoms do not improve or if they worsen.

Side Effects

Dizziness, lightheadedness, drowsiness, difficulty urinating, sleep disturbances, headache, and anxiety may occur. If these effects persist or worsen, notify your doctor or pharmacist promptly.

Dizziness and lightheadedness can increase the risk of falling. Get up slowly when rising from a sitting or lying position.

Tell your doctor promptly if any of these side effects occur: muscle spasm/stiffness, shaking (tremor), restlessness, mask-like facial expression, drooling. Your doctor may prescribe another medication for you to take with haloperidol to decrease these side effects.

Remember that your doctor has prescribed this medication because he or she has judged that the benefit to you is greater than the risk of side effects. Many people using this medication do not have serious side effects.

In rare cases, haloperidol may increase your level of a certain chemical made by the body (prolactin). For females, this increase in prolactin may result in unwanted breast milk, missed/stopped periods, or difficulty becoming pregnant. For males, it may result in decreased sexual ability, inability to produce sperm, or enlarged breasts.

Precautions

Before taking haloperidol, tell your doctor or pharmacist if you are allergic to it; or if you have any other allergies. This product may contain inactive ingredients, which can cause allergic reactions or other problems. Talk to your pharmacist for more details.

Before using this medication, tell your doctor or pharmacist your medical history, especially of: a certain severe nervous system problem (severe CNS depression), Parkinson's disease, bipolar disorder, difficulty urinating (for example, due to prostate problems), glaucoma, heart problems (e.g., angina), overactive thyroid (hyperthyroidism), seizures, low white blood cell count.

Haloperidol may cause a condition that affects the heart rhythm (QT prolongation). QT prolongation can rarely cause serious (rarely fatal) fast/irregular heartbeat and other symptoms (such as severe dizziness, fainting) that need medical attention right away.

The risk of QT prolongation may be increased if you have certain medical conditions or are taking other drugs that may cause QT prolongation. Before using haloperidol, tell your doctor or pharmacist of all the drugs you take and if you have any of the following conditions: certain heart problems (heart failure, slow heartbeat, QT prolongation in the EKG), family history of certain heart problems (QT prolongation in the EKG, sudden cardiac death).

Low levels of potassium or magnesium in the blood may also increase your risk of QT prolongation. This risk may increase if you use certain drugs (such as diuretics/"water pills") or if you have conditions such as severe sweating, diarrhea, or vomiting. Talk to your doctor about using haloperidol safely.

This drug may make you dizzy or drowsy. Alcohol or marijuana (cannabis) can make you more dizzy or drowsy. Do not drive, use machinery, or do anything that needs alertness until you can do it safely. Limit alcoholic beverages. Talk to your doctor if you are using marijuana (cannabis).

Before having surgery, tell your doctor or dentist about all the products you use (including prescription drugs, nonprescription drugs, and herbal products).

This medication can reduce sweating, making you more likely to get heatstroke. Avoid hard work and exercise in hot weather.

Older adults may be more sensitive to the side effects of this drug, especially drowsiness, dizziness, lightheadedness, difficulty urinating, and heart effects such as QT prolongation (see above). Drowsiness, dizziness, and lightheadedness can increase the risk of falling.

During pregnancy, this medication should be used only when clearly needed. Babies born to mothers who have used this drug during the last 3 months of pregnancy may rarely develop symptoms including muscle stiffness or shakiness, drowsiness, feeding/breathing difficulties, or constant crying. If you notice any of these symptoms in your newborn especially during their first month, tell the doctor right away.

Since untreated mental/mood problems (such as schizophrenia, schizoaffective disorders) can be a serious condition, do not stop taking this medication unless directed by your doctor. If you are planning pregnancy, become pregnant, or think you may be pregnant, immediately discuss with your doctor the benefits and risks of using this medication during pregnancy.

This drug passes into breast milk and could have undesirable effects on a nursing infant. Consult your doctor before breast-feeding.

Interactions

Drug interactions may change how your medications work or increase your risk for serious side effects. This document does not contain all possible drug interactions. Keep a list of all the products you use (including prescription/nonprescription drugs and herbal products) and share it with your doctor and pharmacist. Do not start, stop, or change the dosage of any medicines without your doctor's approval.

Some products that may interact with this drug include: anticholinergic medications (for example, antispasmodics such as belladonna alkaloids, scopolamine), cabergoline, ketoconazole, lithium, methyldopa, drugs for Parkinson's disease (such as levodopa and carbidopa, selegiline), paroxetine, pergolide, quinupristin-dalfopristin, rifampin, saquinavir.

Many drugs besides haloperidol may affect the heart rhythm (QT prolongation), including amiodarone, dofetilide, pimozide, quinidine, sotalol, procainamide, macrolide antibiotics (such as erythromycin), among others. Therefore, before using haloperidol, report all medications you are currently using to your doctor or pharmacist.

Tell your doctor or pharmacist if you are taking other products that cause drowsiness such as opioid pain or cough relievers (such as codeine, hydrocodone), alcohol, marijuana (cannabis), drugs for sleep or anxiety (such as alprazolam, lorazepam, zolpidem), muscle relaxants (such as carisoprodol, cyclobenzaprine), or antihistamines (such as cetirizine, diphenhydramine).

Check the labels on all your medicines (such as allergy or cough-and-cold products) because they may contain ingredients that cause drowsiness. Ask your pharmacist about using those products safely.