

[Home](#)

2. Meperidine

Meperidine

Generic name: meperidine (oral/injection) [*me-PER-i-deen*]**Brand names:** [Demerol](#), Demerol HCl**Dosage forms:** injectable solution (100 mg/mL; 25 mg/mL; 50 mg/mL; 75 mg/mL), oral syrup (50 mg/5 mL), ... [show all 3 dosage forms](#)**Drug class:** [Opioids \(narcotic analgesics\)](#)[Medically reviewed](#) by Drugs.com on Aug 4, 2023. Written by [Cerner Multum](#).[Uses](#) [Side effects](#) [Warnings](#) [Before taking](#) [Dosage](#) [Interactions](#) [FAQ](#)

What is meperidine?

Meperidine is an opioid medication used to treat moderate-to-severe pain.

Meperidine may also be used for purposes not listed in this medication guide.

Meperidine side effects

Get emergency medical help if you have **signs of an allergic reaction**: hives; difficult breathing; swelling of your face, lips, tongue, or throat.

Opioid medicine can slow or stop your breathing, and death may occur. A person caring for you should seek emergency medical attention if you have slow breathing with long pauses, blue colored lips, or if you are hard to wake up.

Meperidine may cause serious side effects. Stop using meperidine and call your doctor at once if you have:

- slow heartbeats, weak or shallow breathing, breathing that stops during sleep;
- severe drowsiness, feeling like you might pass out;
- confusion, mood changes;
- severe [constipation](#);
- tremors, muscle movements you cannot control, or a seizure (convulsions); or
- **low cortisol levels**--nausea, vomiting, loss of appetite, dizziness, worsening tiredness or weakness.

Seek medical attention right away if you have symptoms of serotonin syndrome, such as: agitation, hallucinations, fever, sweating, shivering, [fast heart rate](#), muscle stiffness, twitching, loss of coordination, nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea.

Serious side effects may be more likely in older adults and those who are malnourished or debilitated.

Long-term use of opioid medication may affect fertility (ability to have children) **in men or women**. It is not known whether opioid effects on fertility are permanent.

Common side effects of meperidine may include:

- dizziness, drowsiness;
- headache;
- nausea, vomiting; or
- sweating.

This is not a complete list of side effects and others may occur. Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects. You may report side effects to FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.

 [Meperidine side effects](#) (more detail)

Related/similar drugs

Hydroxyzine

Hydroxyzine is an antihistamine used to treat itching, hives, and anxiety. It also acts as a ...

Reviews & ratings

5.9 / 10

[1,404 Reviews](#)

[View more](#)

Tramadol

Tramadol is an opioid medication that may be used to treat moderate to moderately severe chronic ...

Reviews & ratings

7.0 / 10

[1,876 Reviews](#)

[View more](#)

FEATURED

Ozempic

Learn about Ozempic (semaglutide) for type 2 diabetes treatment, weight management, cardiovascular ...

Reviews & ratings

6.6 / 10

[1,504 Reviews](#)

[1,304 Reviews](#)

[View more](#)

Cyclobenzaprine

Cyclobenzaprine is a muscle relaxant and works by blocking pain sensations. Includes ...

Reviews & ratings

6.0 / 10

[618 Reviews](#)

[View more](#)

Meloxicam

Meloxicam is a nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug used to treat pain or inflammation caused by ...

Reviews & ratings

6.3 / 10

[600 Reviews](#)

[View more](#)

Aspirin

Aspirin is used to treat mild to moderate pain and to reduce fever or inflammation. Learn about ...

Reviews & ratings

7.8 / 10

[51 Reviews](#)

[View more](#)

Naproxen

Naproxen is a nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug used to treat pain or inflammation caused by ...

Reviews & ratings

6.8 / 10

[683 Reviews](#)

[View more](#)

Paracetamol

Paracetamol (Panadol, Calpol, Alvedon) is a widely used over-the-counter painkiller and fever ...

Reviews & ratings

6.1 / 10

[13 Reviews](#)

[View more](#)

Tylenol

Tylenol is a pain reliever and a fever reducer used to treat many conditions such as headaches ...

Reviews & ratings

5.8 / 10

[30 Reviews](#)

[View more](#)

Valium

Valium is used to treat anxiety disorders, alcohol withdrawal symptoms, or muscle spasms. Learn ...

Reviews & ratings

8.6 / 10

[341 Reviews](#)

[View more](#)

Warnings

MISUSE OF OPIOID MEDICINE CAN CAUSE ADDICTION, OVERDOSE, OR DEATH. Keep the medication in a place where others cannot get to it.

Using opioid medicine during pregnancy may cause life-threatening withdrawal symptoms in the newborn.

Fatal side effects can occur if you use opioid medicine with alcohol, or with other drugs that cause drowsiness or slow your breathing.

Before taking this medicine

You should not use meperidine if you are allergic to it, or if you have:

- severe asthma or breathing problems; or
- a blockage in your stomach or intestines.

Do not use meperidine if you have used an MAO inhibitor in the past 14 days. A dangerous [drug interaction](#) could occur. MAO inhibitors include [isocarboxazid](#), linezolid, [methylene blue](#) injection, [phenelzine](#), [rasagiline](#), [selegiline](#), [tranylcypromine](#), and others.

Tell your doctor if you have ever had:

- a [head injury](#), [brain tumor](#), or seizures;
- breathing problems, [sleep apnea](#);
- drug or alcohol addiction, or mental illness;
- a blockage in your stomach or intestines;
- urination problems;
- liver or kidney disease;
- problems with your gallbladder, adrenal gland, or thyroid;
- [sickle cell anemia](#); or
- abnormal curvature of the spine that affects breathing.

If you use opioid medicine while you are pregnant, your baby could become dependent on the drug. This can cause life-threatening withdrawal symptoms in the baby after it is born. Babies born dependent on opioids may need medical treatment for several weeks.

Do not breastfeed while using meperidine. meperidine can pass into breast milk and cause drowsiness, breathing problems, or death in a nursing baby.

How should I use meperidine?

Follow the directions on your prescription label and read all medication guides. **Never use meperidine in larger amounts, or for longer than prescribed.** Tell your doctor if you feel an increased urge to take more of this medicine.

Never share opioid medicine with another person, especially someone with a history of drug abuse or addiction. MISUSE CAN CAUSE ADDICTION, OVERDOSE, OR DEATH. Keep the medication in a place where others cannot get to it. Selling or giving away opioid medicine is against the law.

Meperidine **oral** is taken by mouth.

Meperidine **injection** is given as an infusion into a vein, or injected into a muscle or under the skin. A healthcare provider will give you this injection.

Measure **liquid medicine** carefully. Use the dosing syringe provided, or use a medicine dose-measuring device (not a kitchen spoon).

Do not stop using this medicine suddenly after long-term use, or you could have unpleasant withdrawal symptoms. Ask your doctor how to safely stop using meperidine.

Never crush or break a meperidine pill to inhale the powder or mix it into a liquid to inject the drug into your vein. This practice has resulted in death with the misuse of prescription drugs.

Store at room temperature away from moisture and heat. Keep track of your medicine. You should be aware if anyone is using it improperly or without a prescription.

Do not keep leftover opioid medication. **Just one dose can cause death in someone using this medicine accidentally or improperly.** Ask your pharmacist where to locate a drug take-back disposal program. If there is no take-back program, flush the unused medicine down the toilet.

 [Detailed Meperidine dosage information](#)

What happens if I miss a dose?

Since meperidine is used for pain, you are not likely to miss a dose. Skip any missed dose if it is almost time for your next dose. **Do not** use two doses at one time.

What happens if I overdose?

Seek emergency medical attention or call the Poison Help line at 1-800-222-1222. **A meperidine overdose can be fatal, especially in a child or other person using the medicine without a prescription.** Overdose symptoms may include slow breathing and heart rate, severe drowsiness, muscle weakness, cold and clammy skin, blue-colored skin or lips, fainting, or coma.

What should I avoid while using meperidine?

Do not drink alcohol. Dangerous side effects or death can occur when alcohol is combined with meperidine.

Avoid driving or hazardous activity until you know how meperidine will affect you. Dizziness or drowsiness can cause falls, accidents, or severe injuries.

What other drugs will affect meperidine?

You may have breathing problems or withdrawal symptoms if you start or stop taking certain other medicines. Tell your doctor if you also use an antibiotic, antifungal medication, heart or blood pressure medication, seizure medication, or medicine to treat HIV or [hepatitis C](#).

Opioid medication can interact with many other drugs and cause dangerous side effects or death. Be sure your doctor knows if you also use:

- **other narcotic medications**--opioid pain medicine or prescription cough medicine;
- **a sedative like Valium**--diazepam, [alprazolam](#), lorazepam, Xanax, Klonopin, Versed, and others;
- **drugs that make you sleepy or slow your breathing**--a sleeping pill, muscle relaxer, medicine to treat mood disorders or mental illness; or

- **drugs that affect serotonin levels in your body**--a stimulant, or medicine for [depression](#), [Parkinson's disease](#), migraine headaches, serious infections, or nausea and vomiting.

This list is not complete. Other drugs may affect meperidine, including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and [herbal products](#). **Not all possible interactions are listed here.**

 [Meperidine drug interactions](#) (more detail)

Does meperidine interact with my other drugs?

Enter medications to view a detailed interaction report using our [Drug Interaction Checker](#).

+

Add

Popular FAQ

What is pethidine used for?



More about meperidine

- [Check interactions](#)
- [Compare alternatives](#)
- [Pricing & coupons](#)
- [Reviews \(101\)](#)
- [Drug images](#)
- [Latest FDA alerts \(1\)](#)
- [Side effects](#)
- [Dosage information](#)
- [During pregnancy](#)
- [Drug class: Opioids \(narcotic analgesics\)](#)
- [Breastfeeding](#)
- [En español](#)

Patient resources

- [Meperidine \(Injection\) advanced reading](#)
- [Meperidine \(Oral\) \(Advanced Reading\)](#)

- [Meperidine Tablets](#)
- [Meperidine Injection](#)

Other brands

[Demerol](#), [Meperitab](#)

Professional resources

- [Meperidine monograph](#)
- [Meperidine \(FDA\)](#)
- [Meperidine Injection \(FDA\)](#)
- [Meperidine Tablets \(FDA\)](#)

Other brands

[Demerol](#)

Related treatment guides

- [Light Sedation](#)
- [Pain](#)

Further information


Remember, keep this and all other medicines out of the reach of children, never share your medicines with others, and use this medication only for the indication prescribed.

Always consult your healthcare provider to ensure the information displayed on this page applies to your personal circumstances.

[Medical Disclaimer](#)

Copyright 1996-2025 Cerner Multum, Inc. Version: 17.01.

DRUG STATUS

| Availability | |
|---|--------------------------|
| Rx | Prescription only |
| Pregnancy & Lactation | |
|  | Risk data available |
| CSA Schedule* | |
| 2 | High potential for abuse |
| Approval History | |
|  | Drug history at FDA |

User Reviews & Ratings

9.3 / 10

[101 Reviews](#)

Images

[Meperidine Hydrochloride 50 mg \(A 158\)](#)



[View larger images](#)

Drugs.com Mobile App

Access drug & treatment information, identify pills, check interactions and set up personal medication records.



About

[About Drugs.com](#)

[Advertising policy](#)

[Attribution & citations](#)

Terms & privacy

[Terms of use](#)

[Editorial policy](#)

[Privacy policy](#)

Support

[Help center](#)

[Sitemap](#)

[Contact us](#)



[Subscribe to our newsletter](#) for the latest medication news, new drug approvals and FDA alerts.

Drugs.com provides accurate and independent information on more than 24,000 prescription drugs, over-the-counter medicines and natural products. This material is provided for educational purposes only and is not intended for medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. Data sources include Micromedex (updated 7 Apr 2025), Cerner Multum™ (updated 13 Apr 2025), ASHP (updated 10 Apr 2025) and others.



Ad Choices
ADVERTISEMENT



Copyright © 2000-2025 Drugs.com. All rights reserved.