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2. Clonidine

Clonidine

Generic name: clonidine (oral) [*KLOE-ni-deen*]

Brand names: [Catapres](#), [Kapvay](#), [Onyda XR](#)

Dosage forms: oral tablet (0.1 mg; 0.2 mg; 0.3 mg), oral tablet extended release (0.1 mg/12 hr), extended-release oral suspension (0.1 mg/mL)

Drug class: [Antiadrenergic agents, centrally acting](#)

Medically reviewed by [Sanjai Sinha, MD](#). Last updated on May 31, 2024.

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What is clonidine?

[Clonidine](#) lowers blood pressure by decreasing the levels of certain chemicals in your blood. This allows your blood vessels to relax and your heart to beat more slowly and easily.

Clonidine is used to treat hypertension ([high blood pressure](#)).

The Kapvay brand is an extended-release tablet used to treat [attention deficit hyperactivity disorder \(ADHD\)](#).

[Onyda XR](#) is an extended-release oral suspension used to treat ADHD in children 6 years and older.

Clonidine is sometimes given with other medications. Clonidine is also available as a transdermal patch worn on the skin. Do not use two forms of this medicine at the same time.

Warnings

Before you take clonidine, tell your doctor if you have heart disease or severe coronary artery disease, a heart rhythm disorder, slow heartbeats, low blood pressure, a history of heart attack or stroke, kidney disease, or if you have ever had an allergic reaction to a Catapres TTS transdermal skin patch.

Use only as directed. Tell your doctor if you use other medicines or have other medical conditions or [allergies](#).

Before taking this medicine

You should not take this medicine if you are allergic to clonidine.

To make sure clonidine is safe for you, tell your doctor if you have:

- heart disease or severe [coronary artery disease](#);
- a heart rhythm disorder, slow heartbeats;

- high or [low blood pressure](#), or a history of fainting spells;
- a [heart attack](#) or stroke;
- [pheochromocytoma](#) (tumor of the adrenal gland);
- kidney disease; or
- if you have ever had an allergic reaction to a Catapres TTS transdermal skin patch.

It is not known if clonidine will harm an unborn baby. Tell your doctor if you are pregnant or plan to become pregnant.

If you are pregnant, your name may be listed on a pregnancy registry to track the effects of clonidine on the baby.

Clonidine may affect fertility in men or women. Pregnancy could be harder to achieve while either parent is using this medicine.

If you are breastfeeding, tell your doctor if you notice [somnolence](#), tiredness, rapid breathing, and poor feeding in the nursing baby.

Catapres is not approved for use by anyone younger than 18 years old. Do not give **Kapvay** to a child younger than 6 years old.

 [Clonidine pregnancy and breastfeeding warnings](#) (more detail)

How should I take clonidine?

Take clonidine exactly as prescribed by your doctor. Follow all directions on your prescription label and read all medication guides or instruction sheets. Your doctor may occasionally change your dose.

Clonidine is usually taken in the morning and at bedtime. If you take different doses of this medicine at each dosing time, it may be best to take the larger dose at bedtime.

Clonidine may be taken with or without food.

Swallow the extended-release tablet whole and do not crush, chew, or break it.

Tell your doctor if you have a planned surgery.

You may have withdrawal symptoms if you stop using this medicine suddenly. Ask your doctor before stopping the medicine.

Call your doctor if you are sick with [vomiting](#). **This is especially important for a child taking clonidine.**

If you have high blood pressure, keep using this medicine even if you feel well. High blood pressure often has no symptoms.

Store at room temperature away from moisture, heat, and light.

 [Clonidine patient tips](#) (more detail)

Dosing information

Usual Adult Dose for Hypertension

Oral:

- Initial dose: 0.1 mg orally 2 times a day (morning and bedtime)
- Titration: Increments of 0.1 mg orally per day may be made at weekly intervals to desired response
- Maintenance dose: 0.2 to 0.6 mg orally per day in divided doses
- Maximum dose: 2.4 mg orally per day in divided doses

Comments:

- Taking the larger portion of the oral daily dose at bedtime may minimize transient adjustment effects of dry mouth and drowsiness

Transdermal patches:

- Initial dose: 0.1 mg/24 hr patch applied every 7 days
- Maintenance dose: If, after 1 to 2 weeks the desired reduction in blood pressure is not achieved, increase the dosage by adding another 0.1 mg/24 hr patch or changing to a larger system
- Maximum dose: Doses above two 0.3 mg/24 hr patches applied every 7 days is usually not associated with additional efficacy

Comments:

- The transdermal patch should be applied to a hairless area of intact skin on the upper outer arm or chest.
- Each new patch should be applied on a different skin site from the previous location.
- If the patch loosens during 7-day wearing, the adhesive cover should be applied directly over the system to ensure good adhesion.
- There have been rare reports of the need for patch changes prior to 7 days to maintain blood pressure control.
- When substituting patches for the oral formulation or for other antihypertensive drugs, physicians should be aware that the antihypertensive effect of the patches may not commence until 2 to 3 days after initial application; therefore, gradual reduction of prior drug dosage is advised. Some or all previous antihypertensive treatment may have to be continued, particularly in patients with more severe forms of hypertension.

Use: For hypertension, alone or in combination with other antihypertensive agents

Usual Pediatric Dose for Attention Deficit Disorder

Kapvay Extended-release tablets:

6 years and older:

- Initial dose: 0.1 mg orally at bedtime
- Titration: Increase in 0.1 mg/day increments every 7 days until desired response; doses should be administered twice daily (either split equally or with the higher split dosage given at bedtime)
- Maximum dose: 0.4 mg/day in 2 divided doses

Comments:

- May be taken with or without food.
- If a dose is missed, that dose should be skipped and take the next dose as scheduled.
- Tablets should be swallowed whole, and not crushed, chewed, or broken to avoid increasing the rate of drug release.
- When discontinuing therapy, taper daily dose by no more than 0.1 mg every 3 to 7 days.

Use: For the treatment of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) as monotherapy or as adjunctive therapy to stimulant medications.

Onyda XR Extended-release oral suspension

-Children 6 years and older.

-Initial Onyda XR dose: 0.1 mg orally once daily at bedtime with or without food. Dosage may be increased in increments of 0.1 mg per day at weekly intervals.

-Maximum recommended dosage: 0.4 mg once daily at bedtime.

-Comments: Do not substitute Onyda XR for other clonidine products on a mg-per-mg basis because of differing pharmacokinetic profiles.

-When discontinuing: Taper the dose in decrements of no more than 0.1 mg every 3 to 7 days to avoid rebound hypertension.

 [Detailed Clonidine dosage information](#)

What happens if I miss a dose?

Skip the missed dose and use your next dose at the regular time. 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.

Overdose symptoms may include feeling cold, irritable, weak, drowsy, or light-headed, or having weak reflexes, pinpoint pupils, slow heartbeats, shallow breathing, or a seizure.

What should I avoid while taking clonidine?

Avoid drinking alcohol. It may increase certain side effects of clonidine.

Avoid driving or hazardous activity until you know how clonidine will affect you. [Dizziness](#) or drowsiness can cause falls, accidents, or severe injuries.

Avoid becoming overheated or dehydrated during exercise and in hot weather.

Clonidine side effects

Get emergency medical help if you have **signs of an allergic reaction to clonidine**: [hives](#); difficult breathing; swelling of your face, lips, tongue, or throat.

Call your doctor at once if you have:

- severe chest pain, shortness of breath, irregular heartbeats;
- a very [slow heart rate](#); or
- a light-headed feeling, like you might pass out.

Common clonidine side effects may include:

- drowsiness, dizziness;
- feeling tired or irritable;

- dry mouth;
- [constipation](#), loss of appetite; or
- sleep problems ([insomnia](#)), nightmares.

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.

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

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What other drugs will affect clonidine?

Using clonidine with other drugs that make you drowsy can worsen this effect. Ask your doctor before using opioid medication, a sleeping pill, a muscle relaxer, or medicine for [anxiety](#) or [seizures](#).

Tell your doctor about all your other medicines, especially:

- other heart or blood pressure medications;
- an antidepressant; or
- any other medicine that contains clonidine.

This list is not complete. Other drugs may interact with clonidine, including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, [vitamins](#), and [herbal products](#). Not all possible interactions are listed in this medication guide.

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

Does clonidine interact with my other drugs?

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

clonidine

+

Enter a drug name

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References

1. [Kapvay Prescribing Information](#)
2. [Catapres-TTS Package Insert FDA](#)
3. [Onyda XR Package Insert](#)

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Patient resources

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- [Clonidine, clonidine Hydrochloride monograph](#)
- [Clonidine \(FDA\)](#)
- [Clonidine Extended Release Tablets \(FDA\)](#)
- [Clonidine Injection \(FDA\)](#)

- [Clonidine Patch \(FDA\)](#)
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Further information

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

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

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DRUG STATUS

Availability	
Rx	Prescription only
Pregnancy & Lactation	
	Risk data available
CSA Schedule*	
N/A	Not a controlled drug
Approval History	
	Drug history at FDA
WADA Class	
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Clonidine Hydrochloride 0.1 mg (R 127)



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