



[Home](#)

2. Benadryl

Benadryl

Generic name: [diphenhydramine](#) [*DYE-fen-HYE-dra-meen*]

Drug classes: [Anticholinergic antiemetics](#), [Anticholinergic antiparkinson agents](#), [Antihistamines](#), [Miscellaneous anxiolytics, sedatives and hypnotics](#)

Medically reviewed by [Sanjai Sinha, MD](#). Last updated on Feb 29, 2024.

[Uses](#) [Warnings](#) [Before taking](#) [Dosage](#) [Side effects](#) [Interactions](#) [FAQ](#)

What is Benadryl?

Benadryl is an antihistamine that reduces the effects of natural chemical histamine in the body. Histamine can produce symptoms of sneezing, itching, watery eyes, and runny nose.

Benadryl is used to treat sneezing, runny nose, watery eyes, hives, skin rash, itching, and other cold or [allergy symptoms](#).

Benadryl is also used to treat motion sickness, to induce sleep, and to treat certain symptoms of Parkinson's disease.

Warnings

You should not use Benadryl to make a child sleepy.

When taking Benadryl, use caution driving, operating machinery, or performing other hazardous activities.

Diphenhydramine may cause dizziness or drowsiness. If you experience dizziness or drowsiness, avoid these activities.

Use alcohol cautiously. Alcohol may increase drowsiness and dizziness while taking Benadryl.

Do not give this medication to a child younger than 2 years old. **Always ask a doctor before giving a cough or cold medicine to a child.** Death can occur from the misuse of cough and cold medicines in very young children.

Before taking this medicine

You should not use Benadryl if you are allergic to diphenhydramine.

Ask a doctor or pharmacist if it is safe for you to take this medicine if you have other medical conditions, especially:

- blockage in your digestive tract (stomach or intestines);
- bladder obstruction or other urination problems;
- a colostomy or ileostomy;

- liver or kidney disease;
- asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), or other breathing disorder;
- cough with mucus, or cough caused by smoking, emphysema, or chronic bronchitis;
- heart disease, low blood pressure;
- glaucoma;
- a thyroid disorder; or
- if you take potassium (Cytra, Epiklor, K-Lyte, K-Phos, Kaon, Klor-Con, Polycitra, Urocit-K).

It is not known whether Benadryl will harm an unborn baby. **Ask a doctor before using this medicine if you are pregnant.**

Diphenhydramine can pass into breast milk and may harm a nursing baby. Antihistamines may also slow breast milk production. **Ask a doctor before using this medicine if you are breast-feeding.**

Older adults may be more likely to have side effects from this medicine.

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

How should I take Benadryl?

Use Benadryl exactly as directed on the label, or as prescribed by your doctor. Do not use in larger or smaller amounts or for longer than recommended. Cold or allergy medicine is usually taken only for a short time until your symptoms clear up.

Do not give this medication to a child younger than 2 years old. **Always ask a doctor before giving a cough or cold medicine to a child.** Death can occur from the misuse of cough and cold medicines in very young children.

You should not use Benadryl to make a child sleepy.

Measure liquid medicine with the dosing syringe provided, or with a special dose-measuring spoon or medicine cup. If you do not have a dose-measuring device, ask your pharmacist for one.

For motion sickness, take Benadryl 30 minutes before you will be in a situation that causes you motion sickness (such as a long car ride, airplane or boat travel, amusement park rides, etc). Continue taking Benadryl with meals and at bedtime for the rest of the time you will be in a motion-sickness situation.

As a sleep aid, take Benadryl within 30 minutes before bedtime.

Call your doctor if your symptoms do not improve after 7 days of treatment, or if you have a fever with a headache, cough, or skin rash.

This medication can affect the results of allergy skin tests. Tell any doctor who treats you that you are using Benadryl.

Store at room temperature away from moisture and heat.

 [Detailed Benadryl dosage information](#)

What happens if I miss a dose?

Since Benadryl is used when needed, you may not be on a dosing schedule. If you are on a schedule, use the missed dose as soon as you remember. Skip the missed dose if it is almost time for your next scheduled dose. Do not use extra medicine to make up the missed dose.

What happens if I overdose?

Seek emergency medical attention or call the Poison Help line at 1-800-222-1222.

What to avoid

Benadryl may cause blurred vision and may impair your thinking or reactions. Be careful if you drive or do anything that requires you to be alert and able to see clearly.

Drinking alcohol can increase certain side effects of diphenhydramine.

Ask a doctor or pharmacist before using any other cold, cough, allergy, or sleep medicine. Antihistamines are contained in many combination medicines. Taking certain products together can cause you to get too much of this type of medicine. Check the label to see if a medicine contains an antihistamine.

Benadryl side effects

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

Stop using Benadryl and call your doctor at once if you have:

- pounding heartbeats or fluttering in your chest;
- painful or difficult urination;
- little or no urinating;
- confusion, feeling like you might pass out; or
- tightness in your neck or jaw, uncontrollable movements of your tongue.

Common Benadryl side effects may include:

- dizziness, drowsiness, loss of coordination;
- dry mouth, nose, or throat;
- constipation, upset stomach;
- dry eyes, blurred vision; or
- day-time drowsiness or "hangover" feeling after night-time use.

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.

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

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What other drugs will affect Benadryl?

Ask a doctor or pharmacist before using this medicine if you are also using any other drugs, including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal products. Some medicines can cause unwanted or dangerous effects when used together. Not all possible interactions are listed in this medication guide.

Taking this medicine with other drugs that make you sleepy or slow your breathing can worsen these effects. Ask your doctor before taking Benadryl with a sleeping pill, narcotic pain medicine, muscle relaxer, or medicine for anxiety, depression, or seizures.

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

Does Benadryl interact with my other drugs?

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

Benadryl

+

Enter a drug name

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Patient resources

Other brands

[Nytol](#), [Complete Allergy Relief](#), [Triaminic Thin Strips Cough & Runny Nose](#)

Professional resources

- [Benadryl Injection prescribing information](#)
- [DiphenhydrAMINE \(AHFS Monograph\)](#)

Other brands

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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 Benadryl 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](#)

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Benadryl Pediatric Dosage Guide

Use these dosage charts for infants and children under 12 years old:
[Benadryl Dosage Charts \(Infants & Children\)](#)

DRUG STATUS

Availability		
	Rx and/or OTC	
Pregnancy & Lactation		
	Risk data available	
CSA Schedule*		
N/A	Not a controlled drug	▼
Approval History		
	FDA approved 1946	▼

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7.0 / 10

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