



[Home](#)

2. Diphenhydramine

# Diphenhydramine

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

**Brand names:** Allergy Relief, [Allermax](#), [Banophen](#), [Benadryl](#), [Compoz Nighttime Sleep Aid](#), ... [show all 27 brands](#)

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

Medically reviewed by [Melisa Puckey, BPharm](#). Last updated on Feb 29, 2024.

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

## What is diphenhydramine?

Diphenhydramine 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.

Diphenhydramine is used to treat sneezing, runny nose, watery eyes, hives, skin rash, itching, and other cold or allergy symptoms.

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

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

## Warnings

When taking diphenhydramine, 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 diphenhydramine.

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 diphenhydramine to make a child sleepy.

## Before taking this medicine

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

Ask a doctor or pharmacist if it is safe for you to take diphenhydramine 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 diphenhydramine 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.

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

## How should I take diphenhydramine?

Use diphenhydramine 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 diphenhydramine 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 diphenhydramine to make a child sleepy.

Measure liquid medicine 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 diphenhydramine 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 diphenhydramine with meals and at bedtime for the rest of the time you will be in a motion-sickness situation.

As a sleep aid, take diphenhydramine 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 diphenhydramine.

Store at room temperature away from moisture and heat.

## What happens if I miss a dose?

Since diphenhydramine 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 should I avoid?

This medication 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.

## Diphenhydramine side effects

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

Stop using diphenhydramine 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 diphenhydramine 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.

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

## Related/similar drugs

### Montelukast

Montelukast is a daily oral medication used to prevent asthma attacks, exercise-induced ...

#### Reviews & ratings

5.6 / 10

[571 Reviews](#)

[View more](#)

### Clonazepam

Clonazepam is used to treat seizures and panic disorder. Learn about side effects, interactions and ...

#### Reviews & ratings

8.2 / 10

[2,176 Reviews](#)

[View more](#)

#### FEATURED

### Xolair

Xolair injection (omalizumab) is used to reduce the risk of severe food allergy reactions ...

#### Reviews & ratings

7.5 / 10

[229 Reviews](#)

[View more](#)

### 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](#)

## Ondansetron

Ondansetron is used to prevent nausea and vomiting caused by surgery, chemotherapy, or radiation by ...

### Reviews & ratings

7.8 / 10

[495 Reviews](#)

[View more](#)

## Ibuprofen

Ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin) treats minor aches and pains caused by the common cold, headaches ...

### Reviews & ratings

7.3 / 10

[240 Reviews](#)

[View more](#)

## Acetaminophen

Acetaminophen is a widely used pain reliever and fever reducer for conditions like headaches ...

### Reviews & ratings

6.1 / 10

[104 Reviews](#)

[View more](#)

## Prednisone

Prednisone is used to treat allergic disorders, ulcerative colitis, psoriasis and arthritis. Learn ...

### Reviews & ratings

7.5 / 10

[867 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](#)

## What other drugs will affect diphenhydramine?

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 diphenhydramine with a sleeping pill, narcotic pain medicine, muscle relaxer, or medicine for anxiety, depression, or seizures.

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

## Does diphenhydramine interact with my other drugs?

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

diphenhydramine

+

Enter a drug name

Add

## Popular FAQ

- What are the strongest sleeping pills?

▼
- What is the max dose of diphenhydramine for adults?

▼
- Does Mucinex help with Covid?

▼
- Does diphenhydramine raise blood pressure?

▼

Does Benadryl help with or cause anxiety?



Can diphenhydramine be used as a sleep aid?



Diphenhydramine Hydrochloride vs Citrate: What's the difference?



[View more FAQ...](#)

## More about diphenhydramine

- [Check interactions](#)
- [Compare alternatives](#)
- [Pricing & coupons](#)
- [Reviews \(541\)](#)
- [Drug images](#)
- [Latest FDA alerts \(2\)](#)
- [Side effects](#)
- [Dosage information](#)
- [Patient tips](#)
- [During pregnancy](#)
- [Support group](#)
- [Drug class: anticholinergic antiemetics](#)
- [Breastfeeding](#)

## Patient resources

- [Diphenhydramine \(Sleep Aid\) Liquid patient information](#)

## Other brands

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

## Professional resources

- [DiphenhydrAMINE monograph](#)
- [Diphenhydramine \(FDA\)](#)
- [Diphenhydramine Capsules \(FDA\)](#)
- [Diphenhydramine Injection \(FDA\)](#)
- [Diphenhydramine Oral Solution \(FDA\)](#)

## Other brands

Related treatment guides

- [Insomnia](#)
- [Allergic Reactions](#)
- [Allergic Rhinitis](#)
- [Allergies](#)

Further information

Remember, keep this and all other medicines out of the reach of children, never share your medicines with others, and use diphenhydramine 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: 6.01.

Benadryl Pediatric Dosage Guide

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

DRUG STATUS

<b>Availability</b>	
	Rx and/or OTC
<b>Pregnancy &amp; Lactation</b>	
	Risk data available
<b>CSA Schedule*</b>	
<b>N/A</b>	Not a controlled drug
<b>Approval History</b>	
	Drug history at FDA

User Reviews & Ratings

5.5 / 10

[541 Reviews](#)

Images

[Diphenhydramine Hydrochloride 25 mg \(44 329\)](#)





[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.