



## Using *Pimozide* in Children and Adolescents

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This information explains how *pimozide* can be used as part of a treatment plan for children and adolescents. You may wish to share this information with your family members to help them to understand your treatment options. Since every person's needs are different, it is important that you follow the advice provided to you by your own doctor, nurse and/or pharmacist and speak to them if you have any questions about this medication.



### Overview

Pimozide (Orap ®) belongs to a group of medications known as “typical antipsychotics.”

### What is *pimozide* used for?

Although it is called an “antipsychotic,” pimozide is more commonly used in the treatment of motor and vocal tics and in patients with Tourette syndrome.

Your doctor may be using this medication for another reason. If you are unclear why this medication is being prescribed, please ask your doctor.



### How does *pimozide* work?

Pimozide works by blocking a certain chemical in the brain called dopamine. The exact way that pimozide works to improve the symptoms of Tourette syndrome is not fully known.

### How well does *pimozide* work in children and adolescents?

Pimozide is approved for the treatment of Tourette syndrome in adolescents in the United States. Current evidence supports the use of pimozide for the treatment of Tourette syndrome in children and adolescents. It is generally used after medications such as haloperidol are found to be ineffective or intolerable; however this may vary depending on each patient's individual clinical situation.

### How should *pimozide* be taken?

Pimozide is taken once a day, and can be taken with or without food. If you find that taking this medication causes stomach discomfort, try taking it with food. This medication should be taken at the same time each day as directed by your doctor. Try to connect it with something you do each day (like eating breakfast or brushing your teeth) so that you don't forget.

Usually, your doctor will start with a low dose that is best suited to your age and size. This dose may then be gradually increased over a few days or weeks based on how you respond to it. You and your doctor can then discuss the best dosage to stay on based on how this medication is tolerated and how well it helps decrease your symptoms.

This medication is only available in tablet form.

## When will *pimozide* start working?

Improvements may be seen in as little as 1 – 2 weeks. However, it can sometimes take up to 6 weeks to see the full benefits of the medication. Medications like pimozide do not work for everyone.

If your symptoms have not improved within 6 weeks, your doctor may recommend you take a different medication.



## How long do I have to take *pimozide*?

This depends on the symptoms you have, how frequently they occur, and how long you have had them. Most people need to take pimozide for several months. Your doctor will discuss with you the benefits and risks to taking pimozide. At this time you can also discuss how long you might need to take this medication.

Do not stop taking pimozide without discussing it with your doctor. If you stop taking pimozide suddenly, it is possible that your symptoms can return.

## Is *pimozide* addictive?

No, pimozide is not addictive and you will not have “cravings” for this medication like you might with nicotine or street drugs. If you and your doctor decide it is best to stop, your doctor will explain how to safely come off this medication so you don’t feel negative effects as your body adjusts to being without it.

## What are the side effects of *pimozide* and what should I do if I get them?

As with most medications, side effects can occur in those who take pimozide. Most side effects are mild and temporary. Sometimes the side effects occur before any of the beneficial effects. It is also possible to experience a side effect that you feel is serious or long-lasting. If this occurs, speak to your doctor about ways to manage the side effects at your next appointment. Here are some of the more common side effects of taking this medication. In brackets are suggested ways to lessen these effects.

### Common side effects

Should any of these side effects be too troublesome for you, please discuss them with your doctor, nurse or pharmacist.

- Drowsiness, dizziness (*try getting up slowly from a sitting or lying down position*)
- Headache (*try using a pain reliever like acetaminophen (Tylenol®)*)
- Blurred vision (*this effect often becomes less noticeable over time*)
- Dry mouth (*try chewing sugarless gum or sucking hard sugar-free candies, ice chips, or popsicles*)
- Constipation (*increase exercise, fluids, fruits, and fiber*)



### Uncommon side effects (e.g. those that occur in less than 5% of patients)

Contact your doctor **IMMEDIATELY** if you have any of these side effects:

- Fast or irregular heartbeat
- Severe dizziness, passing out, or balance difficulties
- Fever, severe muscle stiffness, or difficulty moving
- New twitching or uncontrolled tongue or jaw movements
- Restlessness, or feeling that you constantly need to be moving
- Muscle spasms or cramps
- Rash

**Tip:** Pimozide can make some individuals feel drowsy, dizzy, or slowed down. If you experience these temporary side effects, it is important to avoid operating heavy machinery or driving a car.

## What precautions should my doctor and I be aware of when taking *pimozide*?

Tell your doctor or pharmacist if you:

- Have any allergies or have experienced a reaction to a medication.
- Are taking, or plan to start taking any other medications (including non-prescription medications and herbal products). Some medications may interact with pimozide. Your doctor may need to change the doses of your medications or monitor you carefully for side effects if you are taking medications that interact with pimozide.
- Have seizures, trouble urinating, glaucoma, liver disease or kidney disease, or a personal or family history of a heart condition.
- Are pregnant (or planning to become pregnant) or are breast-feeding.
- Are currently using alcohol or street drugs. These substances may interfere with how well pimozide works for you and/or make you feel drowsy.



**Tip:** When taking this medication, your body may have difficulty regulating your temperature. You need to drink lots of fluids and water to avoid becoming dehydrated. You should avoid doing lots of physical activities on hot days.

## What special instructions should I follow while using *pimozide*?

- Keep all appointments with your doctor and the laboratory. Your doctor may order certain lab tests (e.g. Complete blood count, electrolytes, electrocardiogram) to check how you are responding to pimozide.
- Do not allow anyone else to use your medication.

**Tip:** Avoid eating grapefruit or drinking grapefruit juice. Grapefruit can affect how well this medication works for you, and combined use may lead to serious side effects.

## What should I do if I forget to take a dose of *pimozide*?



If you take pimozide regularly and you forget to take it, take the missed dose as soon as you remember. If it is almost time for your next dose (e.g. within 4 hours), skip the missed dose and return to your normal dosing schedule. Do not take a double dose.



## What storage conditions are needed for *pimozide*?

- Keep this medication in the original container, stored at room temperature away from moisture and heat (e.g. not in the bathroom) and out of direct light.
- Keep this medication out of reach from children.