

Fluphenazine

Why is this medication prescribed?

This medication is a long-acting form of fluphenazine that is used to treat certain mental/mood problems (chronic schizophrenia). Fluphenazine decanoate is usually used in patients who have benefited from regular doses of short-acting forms of fluphenazine and who may benefit from long-term (maintenance) treatment with less frequent dosing. Fluphenazine belongs to a class of medications called phenothiazines and is also referred to as a neuroleptic. It works by affecting the balance of natural chemicals (neurotransmitters) in the brain.

Some of the benefits of continued use of this medication include reduced episodes of hallucinations, delusions, or bizarre behaviors that occur in patients with schizophrenia. It may take 1-3 days to notice an effect from this drug, and up to 4 days to experience the full effect. For severe agitation or other symptoms, use a short-acting medication.

This medication is not recommended for use in children under 12 years of age.

How should this medicine be used?

This medication is given by injection into a muscle (intramuscularly-IM) or beneath the skin (subcutaneously) by a nurse or doctor. This medication is usually injected every 4-6 weeks.

This medication is usually pale yellow in color. If the liquid becomes any darker than pale yellow, is discolored in any other way, or if particles appear in the liquid, do not use the liquid.

Wash and dry your hands thoroughly before measuring and injecting the drug. Clean the injection site with rubbing alcohol. Avoid getting the medication on your skin because allergic reactions (contact dermatitis) may occur. Use this medication regularly in order to get the most benefit from it. The dose should not be greater than 100 milligrams.

What special precautions should I follow?

Before taking fluphenazine decanoate, tell your doctor or pharmacist if you are allergic to it; or to other phenothiazines (e.g., chlorpromazine, perphenazine); or to sesame oil; or to benzyl alcohol; or if you have any other allergies.

This medication should not be given to patients who are unconscious.

This medication should not be used if you have certain medical conditions. Before using this medicine, consult your doctor or pharmacist if you have brain damage, severe nervous system problems (severe CNS depression).

Before using this medication, tell your doctor or pharmacist your medical history, especially of: blood problems (e.g., leukopenia, thrombocytopenia, agranulocytosis), liver problems, breast cancer, eye problems (e.g., glaucoma), heart problems (e.g., very high or very low blood pressure, mitral valve insufficiency), kidney problems, certain types of tumors (pheochromocytoma), seizures, exposure to phosphorus insecticides, chronic breathing problems (e.g., asthma, emphysema, frequent infections), low blood calcium, enlarged prostate, drug or alcohol dependency, Reye's syndrome, other nervous system problems (e.g., cerebrovascular insufficiency, brain tumors, encephalitis, encephalopathy), dehydration.

Before having surgery or any diagnostic testing, tell your doctor or dentist that you are taking fluphenazine decanoate.

This drug may make you dizzy or drowsy or may cause blurred vision. Use caution engaging in activities requiring alertness or clear vision such as driving or using machinery. Avoid alcoholic beverages because they may increase the risk of side effects.

To minimize dizziness and lightheadedness, get up slowly when rising from a seated or lying position.

This medication may make you more sensitive to the sun. Avoid prolonged sun exposure, tanning booths or sunlamps.

The medication can reduce sweating, making you more susceptible to heat stroke. Avoid strenuous work or exercise in hot weather. Avoid being exposed to very cold temperatures (e.g., swimming in cold water). Severe lowering of your body temperature may occur.

Caution is advised when using this drug in children because they may be more sensitive to its effects, especially the side effect of uncontrolled movements.

Caution is advised when using this drug in the elderly, because they may be more sensitive to its effects, especially to facial or muscle twitching, muscle spasms/stiffness, uncontrolled movements (tardive dyskinesia) and possible effects on blood pressure.

This medication should be used only when clearly needed during pregnancy. It should not be used during the first three months of pregnancy fluphenazine may pass into breast milk and may have undesirable effects on a nursing infant. T

What special dietary instructions should I follow?

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

What should I do if I forget a dose?

If you miss an injection, contact your doctor or pharmacist immediately to establish a new dosing schedule.

What side effects can this medication cause?

If you experience any of the following serious side effects, stop taking fluphenazine and seek emergency medical treatment or contact your doctor immediately:

- an allergic reaction (difficulty breathing; closing of the throat; swelling of the lips, tongue, or face; or hives);
- uncontrollable movements of the tongue, face, lips, arms, or legs;
- muscle spasms of the face or neck;
- severe restlessness or tremor;
- severe drowsiness or fainting; or
- a rash.

Other, less serious side effects may be more likely to occur. Continue to take fluphenazine and talk to your doctor if you experience:

- decreased sweating;
- dry mouth or a stuffy nose;
- constipation;
- blurred vision;
- mild restlessness, drowsiness, or tremor;
- difficult urination or dark urine;
- decreased sex drive;
- dizziness;
- increased appetite; or
- menstrual irregularities or swollen breasts.

What storage conditions are needed for this medicine?

Store at room temperature between 15-30 degrees C away from light and moisture. Avoid freezing

In case of emergency/overdose

If overdose is suspected, contact your local poison control center or emergency room immediately.

What other information should I know?

There may be a slightly increased risk of serious, possibly fatal side effects (e.g., pneumonia, heart failure) when this medication is used in older adults with dementia.

Call your doctor immediately if you have uncontrollable movements of the mouth, tongue, cheeks, jaw, arms, or legs.

