

Medication Information

Risperdal

Risperdal (risperidone) is an "atypical" or "second-generation" antipsychotic medication used in the treatment of psychotic disorders (such as schizophrenia) and as a mood stabilizer for patients with bipolar disorder. It may also be used to reduce agitation or aggressive behaviors occurring in various other psychiatric conditions as well as for treating tic disorders. The usual daily dose is between 0.5 and 8 mg.

Precautions: Risperdal usually needs to be taken on a regular basis and should not be discontinued suddenly. Because this medication can cause drowsiness, dizziness, or blurred vision, do not drive or operate heavy machinery until you know how you will be affected. It is best to avoid any use of alcohol or street drugs when taking this medication. If there is a possibility you may become pregnant or breast feed, consult with your physician. Marked weight gain has occurred in some patients taking Risperdal, and this may be associated with the development of hyperlipidemia and/or diabetes mellitus. Also, there is an increased risk of death from cardiac and other causes in elderly patients, and atypical antipsychotic medications are not approved for treating dementia-related psychosis in this population.

Common side effects include: restlessness, dizziness, dry mouth, constipation, sleepiness, weight gain, hyperprolactinemia, headache, blurred vision, constipation, and sexual dysfunction. Extrapyramidal symptoms (muscle stiffness, spasms, tremors) can occur, usually at higher doses. Other adverse effects not listed here may occur. Contact you physician if you develop any unusual or disturbing symptoms.

Alternative Treatments: Zyprexa, Seroquel, Geodon, Abilify, Haldol, Thorazine, Mellaril, Prolixin, Navane), and Clozaril. Other mood stabilizers include: Lithium, Depakote, Tegretol, Trileptal, Lamictal, Topomax, Neurontin, and Gabitril. There are no "natural" substances that have demonstrated antipsychotic effects, but supplementary omega 3 fatty acids have been found helpful in some people with milder mood swings. Various forms of psychotherapy are often beneficial as adjunctive treatment. Left untreated, psychotic disorders and bipolar disorders tend to become more severe and chronic.