

# HALOPERIDOL

Other names: Serenace®



**Important note:** The following information is intended to add to, not replace, the knowledge and judgment of your doctor, pharmacist or other health care professional.

## Why you are taking this medicine

Mental health problems are generally caused by over-activity of certain areas of the brain. Haloperidol works by blocking the action of a number of substances in the brain to alter the activity in these areas. It helps to improve disturbed thoughts and behaviour, and to produce a calming effect where there is aggression and agitation.

Haloperidol also works on areas of the brain to treat nausea and vomiting.

## Why you are taking this medicine

Haloperidol can be used for the following conditions:

- psychosis (i.e. delusions, hallucinations)
- illnesses affecting thoughts, feelings and behaviours
- to prevent nausea and vomiting (anti-emetic)
- to reduce anxiety, delirium or confusion
- to reduce aggression and agitation
- motor tics (involuntary body movements or twitches)

## When to take this medicine

You may have to take haloperidol for several weeks before you feel the full effect. Take haloperidol at the same times each day to avoid missing any doses, and do not stop taking them without consulting your doctor. **Do not stop** treatment suddenly without checking with your doctor first.

## If you miss a dose

Take as soon as possible except when it is close to the time for your next dose. If it is almost time for next dose, skip the missed dose and return to your regular dosing schedule. You should not take two doses at the same time.

## Side Effects

Unfortunately as well as having good effects, most medicines have some effects on your body that are unwanted. These are called *side effects*.

Call your doctor **immediately** if you have any of these side effects:

- fast heartbeat
- increased sweating
- experience restlessness or a sense of feeling wooden or stiff
- agitation or confusion
- tremor, abnormal face or body movements
- yellowing of the skin or whites of the eyes
- blurred vision
- tingling, numbness and sudden colour changes in the hands or feet

Tell your doctor or pharmacist if you have these side effects:

- dizziness, drowsiness
- difficulty sleeping
- headache
- constipation
- dry mouth
- skin rash

As haloperidol can make some people feel drowsy or light headed, and make it dangerous to drive or operate machinery. It is important to make sure you know how your body reacts to haloperidol before you drive a car, operate machinery or ride a bike.

Haloperidol may make your skin more sensitive to sunlight. Avoid bright sunlight or wear protective clothing and use sunscreen.

The list of side effects is **not** complete. Tell your doctor or pharmacist if any of these side effects are of a concern to you.

## **Other Medication**

Tell your doctor or pharmacist if you are taking any other medicine including herbal or complementary products and medicines you can buy without a prescription.

Avoid taking alcohol with this medication.

Haloperidol can interact with other medication, such as:

- Antibiotic (e.g. rifampicin) – can decrease the effect of haloperidol
- Anti-epileptic medication (e.g. carbamazepine, phenytoin) – can decrease the effect of haloperidol
- Tricyclic antidepressants (e.g. amitriptyline) can have an additive effect (e.g. can increase constipation or dry mouth)

## **Storage**

Keep all medicines out of the reach of children.

**Read this leaflet and discuss any questions you have about your medicines with your doctor or pharmacist.**