

Medication: Diphenhydramine	PDN: 6924.04	Last Updated: March 9 2023	PMD: Andrew Travers*	PDC: Tanya Fraser*	Page 1 of 1
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DIPHENHYDRAMINE (Benadryl)

1.0 Classification

- Antihistamine
- Anticholinergic

2.0 Mechanism of Action

- Blocks histamine receptor sites and decreases the effects of histamine such as bronchoconstriction, vasodilation, and angioedema, as well as other histamine mediated effects.
- Anticholinergic with sedative side effects.

3.0 Indications

- Allergic reaction presenting with any of the following:
 - respiratory distress
 - cough, chest tightness, wheeze
 - airway swelling (e.g., lips, tongue, throat, etc.)
 - abnormal vital signs felt secondary to allergic reaction
 - angioedema (e.g., swollen eyes or face)
 - sneezing or runny nose
 - conjunctivitis, watery eyes
 - pruritis
 - urticaria/hives/red rash
 - nausea/vomiting/diarrhea
 - abdominal pain
- Extrapyramidal symptoms (e.g., dystonia, muscle rigidity, akathisia) secondary to haloperidol or metoclopramide administration

4.0 Contraindications

- Patients under the age of 12

5.0 Precautions

- Elderly patients are at increased risk for sedation, dizziness, and hypotension.
- Synergistic sedative effects when used in combination with EtOH or other sedatives.
- Cautious use with closed angle glaucoma

6.0 Route

- May be given IV, IM or Subcut.
- Subcut is preferred in the palliative setting.

7.0 Dosage

Adult

- 25-50 mg given once.
- 25 mg for patients over 60 years of age or for extrapyramidal symptoms.

Pediatric

- Not recommended in the pediatric population. Parents/guardians may give their child a second-

generation antihistamine such as cetirizine (Reactine) as per package directions if they have it.

8.0 Supplied

- 50 mg in a 1 mL vial

9.0 May Be Given By

- PCP/ICP/ACP/CCP

10.0 Adverse Effects

- Drowsiness
- Decreased blood pressure
- Tachycardia

11.0 Special Notes

- Pregnancy category B [if there is a clinical need for it, Category B drugs are considered safe to use].

12.0 References

- Allergic Reactions Clinical Practice Guideline
- Health Canada (healthycanadians.gc.ca)
- Compendium of Pharmaceuticals and Specialties (CPS)

*Electronically Signed

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