

<b>Medication:</b> Diphenhydramine	<b>PDN:</b> 6924.05	<b>Last Updated:</b> August 21 2025	<b>PMD:</b> Andrew Travers*	<b>PDC:</b> 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
- Extrapyrimal 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/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](http://healthycanadians.gc.ca))
- Compendium of Pharmaceuticals and Specialties (CPS)

\*Electronically Signed

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