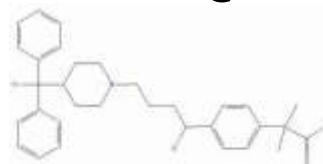


Rx FEXOFENADINE

(Fexofenadine is an antihistamine that reduces the natural chemical histamine in the body)



Fexofenadine is an antihistamine that reduces the natural chemical histamine in the body. Histamine can produce symptoms of sneezing, itching, watery eyes, and runny nose.

Fexofenadine is used to treat the symptoms of seasonal allergies (hay fever) in adults and children.

Fexofenadine is also used to treat skin itching and hives caused by a condition called chronic idiopathic urticaria in adults and children.

Fexofenadine may also be used for purposes other than those listed in this medication guide.

GENERIC NAME: fexofenadine

DRUG CLASS AND MECHANISM

Fexofenadine is an oral, "second generation" antihistamine that is used to treat the signs and symptoms of allergy that are due to histamine. It is similar to the other second generation antihistamines loratadine (Claritin), cetirizine (Zyrtec) and azelastine (Astelin). Histamine is a chemical that is responsible for many of the signs and symptoms of allergic reactions, for example, swelling of the lining of the nose, sneezing, and itchy eyes. Histamine is released from histamine-storing cells (mast cells) and then attaches to other cells that have receptors for histamine. The attachment of the histamine to the receptors causes the cell to be "activated," releasing other chemicals that produce the effects that we associate with allergy, e.g., sneezing. Fexofenadine blocks one type of receptor for histamine (the H1 receptor) and thus prevents activation of H1 receptor-containing cells by histamine. Unlike the first generation antihistamines, fexofenadine and other second-generation antihistamines do not readily enter the brain from the blood, and, therefore, they cause less drowsiness. Fexofenadine was approved by the FDA in July, 1995.

PRESCRIPTION: yes

GENERIC AVAILABLE: no

PREPARATIONS: Tablets, 30, 60 and 180 mg; capsules, 60 mg

USES

Fexofenadine is an antihistamine that provides relief of seasonal allergy symptoms such as runny or itchy nose, sneezing, itchy throat, and watery, itchy, or red eyes. It is also used for hives.

HOW TO USE

Take this medication by mouth usually twice a day, with or without food; or take as directed by your doctor. Antacids containing aluminum and magnesium can decrease the absorption of this drug. Do not take antacids within 2 hours of taking this medication. Do not increase your dose or take this more often than directed. Do not take this medication for several days before allergy testing since test results can be affected. Consult your doctor or pharmacist for more information.

SIDE EFFECTS

Stomach upset, menstrual cramps, back pain, cough, fever, stuffy nose, earache or dizziness may occur. If any of these effects persist or worsen, notify your doctor or pharmacist promptly. This medication does not usually cause drowsiness when used at recommended doses and under normal circumstances. However, this drug may make you dizzy; therefore use caution engaging in activities that require alertness such as driving or using machinery. A serious allergic reaction to this drug is unlikely, but seek immediate medical attention if it occurs. Symptoms of a serious allergic reaction include: rash, itching, swelling, severe dizziness, trouble breathing. If you notice other effects not listed above, contact your doctor or pharmacist.

PRESCRIBED FOR

Fexofenadine is used for the treatment of seasonal allergies and chronic urticaria (hives) in adults and children 6 years of age or older.

DOSING

For seasonal allergies the recommended dose for adults and children 12 years or older is 60 mg twice daily or 180 mg once daily. Children 6-11 years of age should be given 30 mg twice daily. For chronic urticaria, adults and children 12 years or older should use 60 mg twice daily, and children 6-11 years of age should use 30 mg twice daily. Fexofenadine can be taken with or without food.

DRUG INTERACTIONS

Before using this medication, tell your doctor or pharmacist of all prescription and nonprescription products you may use, especially of: antacids containing aluminum and magnesium, St. John's wort. Check the labels on all your medicines (e.g., cough-and-cold products) because they may contain additional antihistamines that could increase your risk for side effects. Ask your pharmacist about the safe use of those products. Do not start or stop any medicine without doctor or pharmacist approval.

OVERDOSE

If overdose is suspected, contact your local poison control center or emergency room immediately. US residents can call the US national poison hotline at 1-800-222-1222. Canadian residents should call their local poison control center directly. Symptoms of overdose may include: unusual drowsiness.

PRECAUTIONS

Before taking fexofenadine, tell your doctor or pharmacist if you are allergic to it; or if you have any other allergies. Before using this medication, tell your doctor or pharmacist your medical history, especially of: kidney disease, heart problems (QT prolongation). Limit alcoholic beverages, as it may intensify drug side effects. (See also Side Effects.) Caution is advised when using this drug in the elderly because they may be more sensitive to the effects of the drug. This medication should be used only when clearly needed during pregnancy. Discuss the risks and benefits with your doctor. It is not known whether this drug passes into breast milk. Consult your doctor before breast-feeding.

MISSED DOSE

If you miss a dose, use it as soon as you remember. If it is near the time of the next dose, skip the missed dose and resume your usual dosing schedule. Do not double the dose to catch up.

STORAGE

The manufacturer of U.S. products recommends storage at room temperature between 68-77 degrees F (20-25 degrees C). The manufacturer of Canadian products recommends storage at room temperature between 59-86 degrees F (15-30 degrees C). Store away from light and moisture. Do not store in the bathroom. Keep all medicines away from children and pets.

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