

Phentermine

Brand Names: Metermine, Duromine, Alenami, Supremine



Short Version:

Phentermine when used for weight loss by itself at high dose (30-40mg/day) is usually associated with around 7% body weight loss, but often associated with insomnia, anxiety and palpitations - so most people don't stick with it. When used in combination with other medications for weight management the usual dose is around 7.5mg a day and is usually much better tolerated, but it doesn't do much by itself for weight either at that dose.

We don't have the 7.5mg dosage available in Australia, but 15mg every second morning seems to work just as well.

Some people metabolise the medication significantly more slowly than other and find that even with the low dose, after a few doses they have side effects. This just means we drop the dose down to every 3rd or 4th day and that usually works for them.

If you do have any concerns about potential side effects - stop taking the medication and tell your doctor.

Detailed version:

What is this medication used for?

It is used for weight loss. We are using it as part of a combination that boost each others effectiveness. By using more than one agent at lower doses we can get similar (or better) benefits to using a single agent at high dose, with less side effects and cost.

What do I need to tell my doctor BEFORE I take this medication?

- If you are allergic to this medication. So we can look at alternative options.
- If you have ever had any of these health problems: Heart disease like heart failure or an irregular heartbeat, medication abuse, high blood pressure, or stroke.
- If you have any of these health problems: Glaucoma, agitation, anxiety, or uncontrolled overactive thyroid.
- If you have kidney disease or are on dialysis.
- If you have taken certain medications for depression or Parkinson's disease in the last 14 days. This includes isocarboxazid, phenelzine, tranylcypromine, selegiline, or rasagiline. Very high blood pressure may happen.
- If you are taking any of these medications: Fluoxetine, fluvoxamine, paroxetine, or sertraline.

These potentially slow the metabolism as mentioned above and so may require dose frequency adjustment.

- If you are using another medication like this one (usually medications for ADHD). If you are not sure, ask your doctor or pharmacist.
- If you are taking any other medication (prescription or OTC, natural product) for weight loss.
- If you are pregnant, may be pregnant, or are planning on getting pregnant. Do not take this medication if you are pregnant.
- If you are breast-feeding. Do not breast-feed while you take this medication.

This is not a full list of all medications or health problems that interact with this medication.

What are some things I need to know or do while I take this medication?

- If you have been taking this medication for a long time or at high doses, it may not work as well and you may need higher doses to get the same effect. This is known as tolerance. Call your doctor if this medication stops working well. Do not take more than ordered without discussing with your doctor first.
- If you have been taking this medication for many weeks, talk with your doctor before stopping. You may want to slowly stop this medication. This should not be an issue with the low doses we are using in this setting, however.
- This medication may be habit-forming; avoid long-term use. Tell your doctor if you have a history of medication or alcohol abuse. This risk is minimised by the low and regular dosing approach.
- You may need to have some heart tests before starting this medication. If you have questions, talk with your doctor.
- If you have high blood sugar (diabetes) and take medications to lower blood sugar, talk with your doctor. Weight loss may raise the chance of low blood sugar if you take medications to lower blood sugar. Enact your hypoglycaemia plan or call your GP, the ambulance, or local emergency department if you are diabetic and have signs of low blood sugar like dizziness, headache, feeling sleepy, feeling weak, shaking, a fast heartbeat, confusion, hunger, or sweating.
- Do not give to a child younger than 17 years of age. Or anyone other than who it is prescribed for.
- This medication may cause harm to the unborn baby if you take it while you are pregnant. If you are pregnant or you get pregnant while taking this medication, call your doctor right away.

What are some side effects that I need to call my doctor about right away?

- Signs of an allergic reaction, like rash; hives; itching; red, swollen, blistered, or peeling skin with or without fever; wheezing; tightness in the chest or throat; trouble breathing, swallowing, or talking; unusual hoarseness; or swelling of the mouth, face, lips, tongue, or throat.
- Signs of high blood pressure like very bad headache or dizziness, passing out, or change in eyesight.
- Chest pain or pressure.
- Change in how you act.
- Mood changes.
- Shakiness.

- Shortness of breath.
- Fast heartbeat or a heartbeat that does not feel normal

These are all extremely rare at the dose we are using.

What are some other side effects of this medication?

All medications may cause side effects. However, most people have no side effects or only have minor side effects, at this planned low dose.

Stop the medication, and see your GP, call the ambulance or visit an emergency department if any of these side effects or any other side effects bother you or do not go away in a couple of days after stopping:

- Dizziness or headache.
- Feeling nervous and excitable.
- Diarrhoea or constipation.
- Dry mouth.
- Trouble sleeping.
- Bad taste in your mouth.
- Lowered interest in sex.
- Not able to get or keep an erection.
- Restlessness.

These are not all of the side effects that may occur. If you have questions about side effects, call your doctor. Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects.

You may report side effects to the national health agency, the Therapeutic Goods Administration, online. (<https://www.tga.gov.au/resources/resource/guidance/reporting-adverse-events>).

How is this medication best taken?

Use this medication as ordered by your doctor. Read all information given to you. Follow all instructions closely.

- Usually every 2nd or 3rd day in the morning by mouth. It doesn't need to be taken with food.
- Avoid taking this medication late in the evening to prevent sleep problems.

What do I do if I miss a dose?

- Skip the missed dose and go back to your normal time the next morning.
- Do not take 2 doses at the same time or extra doses.

How do I store and/or throw out this medication?

- Store at room temperature in a dry place.
- Store this medication in a safe place where children cannot see or reach it, and where other people cannot get to it. Keep all medications away from pets.
- Throw away unused or expired medications. Do not flush down a toilet or pour down a drain unless you are told to do so. Check with your pharmacist if you have questions about the best way to throw out medications.