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ANTIHISTAMINES (7/13)

General Information

Can be used on an as needed basis, yet best if used prior to significant allergy exposure (i.e., cats, cutting grass, picnics, etc).

Oral antihistamines help relieve symptoms of sneezing, clear nasal discharge, itchy/watery/red eyes, and itchy nose/palate/and/or throat, but not nasal congestion. These medications do not help symptoms that are not due to allergy.

Some antihistamines are combined with a decongestant ("D") to help with allergy related nasal congestion.

Use only one antihistamine at a time (i.e., do not use Antivert, Benadryl, Tavist, etc. while taking any of the following medications).

Oral antihistamines are only useful for true allergy symptoms. These medications are not indicated and are not appropriate for use in colds or upper respiratory infections.

First Generation Sedating Oral Antihistamines

Many are available over-the-counter (OTC) without a prescription (Benadryl, Tavist, etc).

First generation antihistamines often cause drowsiness, sedation, reduced motivation, as well as impaired motor and cognitive function. This poses significant safety hazards while driving or operating machinery.

Become less effective if used over a prolonged period of time due to tolerance.

Slow down the normal clearance of mucus from the nose and sinuses and can make you more susceptible to chronic sinusitis.

Second Generation Non-Sedating Oral Antihistamines

Brand Name	Dose Forms	Indicated Age (yr)	Recommended Dose	Level of Sedation
Claritin® (generic loratadine) OTC	1 mg/mL syrup 10 mg tablet 10 mg RediTabs®	2 to 5 ≥ 6	2.5-5 mg once daily 10 mg once daily	Non-sedating Available over the counter
Claritin-D® 12 Hour OTC	5 mg/120 mg extended-release tablet	≥ 12	One tablet twice daily	Non-sedating
Claritin-D® 24 Hour OTC	10 mg/240 mg extended-release tablet	≥ 12	One tablet once daily	Non-sedating
Clarinex®	0.5 mg/ mL syrup 5 mg tablet or 5 mg RediTabs® 2.5 mg RediTabs®	6 mo-11 yo >12	1.0-2.5 mg (2 -5 mL) once daily One 5 mg tablet once daily 1-2 tablets once daily	Non-sedating
Clarinex-D® 12 Hour	2.5 mg/120 mg extended-release tablet	>12	One tablet twice daily	Non-sedating
Clarinex-D® 24 Hour	5 mg/240 mg extended-release tablet	>12	One tablet daily	Non-sedating
Allegra®	Oral suspension 30 mg oral dissolving tablet 60 mg capsule or tablet 180 mg tablet	6 mo-5 yr 6 to 11 ≥ 12 ≥ 12	30 mg twice daily 30 mg twice daily 60 mg twice daily 180 mg once daily	Non-sedating
Allegra-D®	60 mg/120 mg extended-release tablet	≥ 12	One tablet twice daily	Non-sedating
Allegra-D® 24 Hour	180 mg/240 mg extended-release tablet	≥ 12	One tablet once daily	Non-sedating
Zyrtec® (generic cetirizine) OTC	5 mg/5 mL syrup 5 mg chewable tablets 10 mg chewable tablets	2 to 5 6 to 12 ≥ 12	2.5 - 5 mg once daily 1-2 tablets once daily One tablet once daily	Less sedating than most 1 st generation antihistamines
Zyrtec D® 12 Hour OTC	5 mg/120 mg extended release tablet	≥ 12	One tablet twice daily	Less sedating than most 1 st generation antihistamines
Xyzal®	5 mg tablets 2.5 mg per 5 mL oral solution	≥ 12 6 to 11	One tablet once daily in the evening	Non-sedating

All except the Claritin (loratadine) and Zyrtec (cetirizine) products are by prescription only.

Intranasal Antihistamines Sprays (by prescription only)

Brand Name	Dose Forms	Indicated Age (yr)	Recommended Dose
Astelin®	Nasal Spray	6 to 11 ≥ 12	2 sprays each nostril twice daily. Absorbed into the body just like a pill. Unlike oral antihistamines, it is effective for nasal congestion due to allergy and other causes.
Patanase®	Nasal Spray	≥ 12	2 sprays each nostril twice daily. Absorbed into the body just like a pill. Unlike oral antihistamines, it is effective for nasal congestion due to allergy and other causes. Same active ingredient as topical Patanol or Pataday for the eyes.
Astepro®	Nasal Spray		2 sprays each nostril once daily. Absorbed into the body just like a pill. Unlike oral antihistamines, it is effective for nasal congestion due to allergy and other causes.

Intranasal Antihistamine/Nasal steroid combinations (by prescription only)

Brand Name	Dose Forms	Indicated Age (yr)	Recommended Dose
Dymista®	Nasal Spray	≥ 12	1 spray each nostril twice daily. Combination topical nasal steroid and topical antihistamine.

Contraindications

Due to the decongestant component (“D”) of some of the above preparations, this medication is contraindicated in patients with urinary retention, narrow-angle glaucoma, and concurrent use of monoamine oxidase (MAO) inhibitor antidepressants.