

ENT SURGICAL CONSULTANTS

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ORAL ANTIHISTAMINES (4/14)

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, yet **have no effect on nasal congestion**.
- Some antihistamines are combined with a decongestant ("D") to help with allergy related nasal congestion, yet this increases the viscosity of the mucus and may lead to a higher incidence of sinusitis or nasal infection.
- Use only one antihistamine at a time.
- 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	Sedation	Available OTC
Claritin®, or generic loratidine	1 mg/mL syrup 10 mg tablet 10 mg RediTabs®	2 to 5 ≥ 6	2.5-5 mg once daily 10 mg once daily	No	Yes
Claritin-D® 12 Hour	5 mg/120 mg extended-release tablet	≥ 12	One tablet twice daily	No	Yes
Claritin-D® 24 Hour	10 mg/240 mg extended-release tablet	≥ 12	One tablet daily	No	Yes
Zyrtec®, or generic fexofenidine	5 mg/5 ml syrup 5 mg tablets 10 mg tablets	2 to 5 6 to 12 ≥ 12	2.5 mg to 5 mg once daily (or 2.5 mg every 12 hours) 1-2 tablets daily One tablet daily	Mild	Yes
Zyrtec D® 12 Hour	5 mg/120 mg extended release tablet	≥ 12	One tablet twice daily	Mild	Yes
Clarinex	2.5 mg/ 5 mL syrup 5 mg tablet 5 mg RediTabs®	6 mo-11 yo >12	1.0-2.5 mg (2 -5 mL) once daily One 5 mg tablet once daily	No	No
Allegra®	30 mg tablet 60 mg capsule or tablet 180 mg tablet	6 to 11 ≥ 12 ≥ 12	30 mg twice daily 60 mg twice daily 180 mg once daily (SAR only)	No	No
Allegra-D®	60 mg/120 mg extended-release tablet	≥ 12	One tablet twice daily	No	No
Xyzal	5 mg tablet	6 mo-11 yo >12	2.5 mg once daily 5 mg once daily	No	No

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.