

Amantadine

Gocovri, Osmolex ER, Symmetrel (discontinued), a medicine that helps with movement problems and stiffness

Amantadine helps smooth out movement problems, whether from Parkinson's disease or from another medicine you take.

WHAT IT TREATS

Parkinson's, movement effects

HOW YOU TAKE IT

1 or 2 times, early in day

WHEN IT WORKS

Days to 2 weeks

HABIT FORMING

No

✔ This medicine carries **no special FDA safety warning** of that kind.

① WHAT THIS MEDICINE DOES

- **Amantadine** helps the brain use dopamine, the signal that controls smooth movement, and it calms an overactive nerve signal too.
- It is used in Parkinson's disease, and for the extra unwanted movements that levodopa can cause over the years.
- In mental health it is often used for stiffness, slowness, or restlessness caused by an antipsychotic medicine.
- It is also used for the heavy, dragging fatigue that comes with multiple sclerosis, and it is not habit forming.

🕒 HOW TO TAKE IT

- Take it at the same times each day. Keep the last dose before mid-afternoon, because later doses can wreck your sleep.
- It can be taken with or without food. A snack alongside it usually settles any nausea.
- Long-acting capsules must be swallowed whole. If swallowing is hard, ask about sprinkling the contents on applesauce.
- If you miss a dose, take it if the day is still young. If it is evening, skip it rather than lose a night of sleep.
- Drink fluids through the day and stand up slowly, since this medicine can leave you lightheaded at first.

📈 WHAT TO EXPECT

- Many people notice smoother movement within **a few days to 2 weeks**, which is faster than most movement medicines.
- For stiffness caused by another medicine, the change is often clear within the first week. Say so if it is not.
- The benefit can fade after several months in Parkinson's disease. That is common and worth reporting, not hiding.
- Working looks like easier walking, less stiffness, fewer unwanted extra movements, or simply more energy in the day.
- You may see purple, net-like mottling on your legs after weeks or months. It looks alarming but it is harmless and fades after stopping.

♥ COMMON SIDE EFFECTS

- Trouble sleeping is the most common problem. Moving every dose earlier in the day fixes it for most people.
- Dizziness or lightheadedness on standing is common. Rise slowly, hold something, and keep fluids up.
- Nausea and a dry mouth happen often. Food with the dose, sips of water, and sugar-free gum all help.
- Ankle and foot swelling can appear over weeks. Put your feet up, cut back on salt, and mention it at your next visit.
- Vivid dreams and blurry vision can show up early and often settle. Do not drive until your sight feels normal.
- Confusion, or seeing or hearing things that are not there, is more likely in older adults and needs a prompt call.

⚠️ CALL YOUR PRESCRIBER OR GET HELP RIGHT AWAY IF

- Call **911** for a high fever with severe stiffness, confusion, or a racing pulse.
- Call **911** for a seizure, fainting, or sudden trouble breathing.
- Call your prescriber for seeing or hearing things that are not there.
- Call **988** if thoughts of ending your life show up. Free help is there any hour.

🚫 WHAT TO AVOID

- Alcohol adds strongly to the dizziness and confusion, and the two together make falls much more likely.
- Do not drive or use machines until you know how it affects your alertness, balance, and eyesight.
- Tell your prescriber about kidney problems. Your kidneys clear this, so weak kidneys mean a much lower amount.
- Watch for sudden urges to gamble, shop, eat, or have sex. These can come from dopamine medicines and are treatable.
- Some bladder and allergy medicines add to the dry mouth and confusion. Ask a pharmacist to review your full list.

⏸️ STOPPING IT SAFELY

- **Never stop suddenly.** Stopping fast can cause a sharp worsening of stiffness, confusion, fever, or movement.
- Your prescriber will lower it over days to weeks. Ask for the plan in writing so nothing gets missed at home.
- If you have missed several days in a row, call before restarting rather than picking up where you left off.
- If it stops helping after months, that is worth reviewing rather than quietly abandoning the medicine.

❓ QUESTIONS TO ASK

- When in the day should I take my last dose so I can sleep?
- Do my kidneys change the right amount of this for me?
- Is the purple mottling on my legs something to worry about?
- How would we lower this safely if I need to come off it?

Where this information comes from

MedlinePlus. (2023). *Amantadine*. National Library of Medicine. <https://medlineplus.gov/druginfo/meds/a682064.html>

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NOTE

Sources are listed in APA 7th edition style. This handout is general information about a medicine, not medical advice, and it does not replace the instructions from your own prescriber or pharmacist. Never start, change, or stop a medicine on your own. If you think you are having a serious reaction, call your prescriber; if you cannot breathe, cannot stay awake, or are thinking of harming yourself, call 911 or 988 right away.