

Benztropine

Cogentin (brand discontinued; generic only), a medicine that loosens drug-caused muscle stiffness

Benzotropine is usually added to ease the stiffness, tremor, and muscle spasms that another medicine is causing.

WHAT IT TREATS

Stiffness from other meds

HOW YOU TAKE IT

Once or twice daily

WHEN IT WORKS

Spasms: about 15 minutes

HABIT FORMING

No

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

① WHAT THIS MEDICINE DOES

- **Benzotropine** is almost always a helper medicine. It treats stiffness, tremor, and cramping caused by an antipsychotic.
- It restores a chemical balance in the movement part of the brain, which loosens muscles that have gone tight and slow.
- As a shot it breaks a sudden muscle spasm, like a twisted neck or locked jaw, within about **15 minutes**.
- It does not treat lip, tongue, or jaw movements you cannot control. It can make those worse, so report them instead.

⌚ HOW TO TAKE IT

- Take it at the same time each day. Many people do best with a bedtime dose, since it can make you drowsy.
- Swallow the tablet with water, with or without food. A snack helps if it leaves your stomach unsettled.
- If you miss a dose, take it when you remember unless the next one is close. Do not take two doses together.
- Keep drinking water through the day. It softens the dry mouth and helps prevent the constipation this can cause.
- Store it at room temperature away from damp, and keep it in the labeled bottle from the pharmacy.

🦿 WHAT TO EXPECT

- Stiffness and tremor usually ease within a few days of starting, and a shot works within minutes for a spasm.
- Working looks like a looser jaw and neck, a normal walk again, and your face moving the way it used to.
- This is often meant to be temporary. After a few stable months, your prescriber may try lowering it.
- It is not a lifetime medicine for most people. Staying on it out of habit adds side effects with no extra benefit.
- If the stiffness returns when this is lowered, that is useful news. Report it rather than raising it yourself.

♥ COMMON SIDE EFFECTS

- Dry mouth is the most common effect. Sip water, chew sugar-free gum, and keep dental visits, since dryness invites cavities.
- Blurry near vision makes reading harder. It usually improves, so hold off on new glasses for a few weeks.
- Constipation is common. More water, more fiber, and daily walking help, and your pharmacist can suggest a softener.
- Overheating in hot weather is a real risk, because this medicine cuts your sweating. Rest in shade and drink water.
- Trouble starting to urinate, or feeling you have not emptied. Tell your prescriber, especially if you are an older man.
- Memory slips or foggy thinking can creep in quietly. Ask family whether they notice a change, then report it.

⚠️ CALL YOUR PRESCRIBER OR GET HELP RIGHT AWAY IF

- Go to the **ER** for eye pain, halos around lights, or sudden vision loss, which can mean high eye pressure.
- Call **911** for a high fever with hot dry skin and confusion after heat or exercise. That is heat stroke.
- Call the same day if you cannot pass urine at all, or if your belly is swollen and painful.
- New confusion, seeing things, or agitation needs a same-day call, especially in an older adult.

🚫 WHAT TO AVOID

- Hot weather, saunas, and hard workouts are riskier now, because you sweat less. Cool down early rather than pushing on.
- Alcohol adds to the drowsiness and confusion, and it makes the memory effects of this medicine more noticeable.
- Allergy pills, sleep aids, and bladder medicines stack with this one. Show your full list before adding anything.
- Do not drive or use machines until you know how drowsy this makes you and how clear your vision is.
- Tell your prescriber if you have glaucoma or trouble passing urine, since this medicine can make both worse.

⌚ STOPPING IT SAFELY

- Do not stop suddenly. A quick stop can bring back stiffness fast, along with nausea and sweating.
- Your prescriber will lower it over **1 to 2 weeks** and watch to see whether you still need it at all.
- Many people no longer need this once their other medicine has settled. Ask about a trial off it every few months.
- If stopping brings stiffness back within days, call. That answers the question and guides the next step.

❓ QUESTIONS TO ASK

- Which of my medicines is causing the stiffness this treats?
- How long should I expect to keep taking benztropine for this?
- Can we try lowering it once things have been steady a while?
- What should I do differently on very hot or very humid days?

Where this information comes from

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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.