

Fluphenazine

Prolixin, Prolixin Decanoate (brands discontinued; generic only), an older antipsychotic medicine

Fluphenazine treats hallucinations and false beliefs, and it comes as a long-acting shot if daily pills are hard to keep up.

WHAT IT TREATS

Schizophrenia, psychosis

HOW YOU TAKE IT

Daily pills or a depot shot

WHEN IT WORKS

Some relief in 1-2 weeks

HABIT FORMING

No

⚠️ IMPORTANT SAFETY WARNING

Older adults with dementia who take antipsychotic medicines have a higher risk of death. Fluphenazine is not approved for hallucinations or agitation caused by dementia.

① WHAT THIS MEDICINE DOES

- **Fluphenazine** blocks the brain signal that keeps hallucinations and false beliefs going, so the world feels less threatening.
- It is a strong, focused medicine. It causes less sleepiness than some older antipsychotics but affects movement more.
- The long-acting shot lasts two to three weeks, which many people prefer to remembering pills several times a day.
- It treats the illness, not your personality. Feeling like yourself again is the goal, not feeling flattened or blank.

🕒 HOW TO TAKE IT

- Take the pills at the same times each day, with or without food. Set an alarm until the routine sticks on its own.
- The liquid concentrate has to be measured with the supplied dropper and diluted in water or juice before you drink it.
- If you miss a dose, take it when you remember unless your next dose is near. Do not take two doses together.
- For the shot, keep every appointment. Missing one lets the medicine fade and lets symptoms creep back in quietly.
- Store pills at room temperature away from light, and keep the liquid in its original bottle, tightly capped.

📈 WHAT TO EXPECT

- Sleep and agitation often settle first. Voices and false beliefs usually ease over **2 to 6 weeks** of steady dosing.
- Working looks like the voices getting quieter or easier to shrug off, and your day belonging to you again.
- If you switch to the shot, you may keep taking pills for a while so your level stays steady during the changeover.
- The shot stays in your body for **6 to 8 weeks** after the last one, so both benefit and side effects fade slowly.
- Expect a short movement check at visits. It takes a minute and catches stiffness or twitching while it is still easy to treat.

♥️ COMMON SIDE EFFECTS

- Muscle stiffness, a mask-like face, or slowed walking are the most common effects. There is a medicine that treats this well.
- A restless, cannot-sit-still feeling, especially in the legs, is common and treatable. Do not try to tough it out.
- Missed periods, breast tenderness or milk, and lower sex drive come from a hormone shift. Say so, since it can be handled.
- Mild sleepiness and dizziness on standing. Get up slowly and drink enough water, especially in the first two weeks.
- Dry mouth and blurry near vision often ease. Sip water, use sugar-free gum, and keep up with dental checkups.
- Sun sensitivity happens. Sunscreen and a hat prevent burns that would otherwise catch you off guard on a mild day.

⚠️ CALL YOUR PRESCRIBER OR GET HELP RIGHT AWAY IF

- Go to the ER for high fever with rigid muscles, sweating, confusion, and a fast pulse. This is a rare emergency.
- Call right away for a sudden neck twist, locked jaw, or eyes pulled upward. Treatment works within minutes.
- Report lip, tongue, or jaw movements you cannot control the first time you or a family member notices them.
- Call **911** for fainting or a heartbeat that races or pounds and will not calm down on its own.

🚫 WHAT TO AVOID

- Alcohol adds to sleepiness and unsteadiness and can undo the steadiness this medicine is building for you.
- Do not drive or use machinery until you know how this affects your alertness, reflexes, and balance.
- Take care in the heat. This medicine makes it harder for your body to cool itself, so drink water and pace yourself.
- Some antidepressants and seizure medicines raise or lower your level. Show every prescriber your full medicine list.
- Tell your prescriber if you are pregnant, planning to be, or breastfeeding, so the plan can be adjusted safely.

⏸️ STOPPING IT SAFELY

- Do not stop on your own. Symptoms often return weeks later, when it is much harder to get back on track.
- Your prescriber will taper the pills over weeks. With the shot, the fade is built in and takes a couple of months.
- Stopping abruptly can bring nausea, sweating, trouble sleeping, and new movements that would not have happened otherwise.
- If you dislike this medicine, say why. Side effects, cost, and appointments are all fixable if you name them.

❓ QUESTIONS TO ASK

- Would the long-acting shot suit my life better than daily pills?
- Do I need a medicine on hand in case my muscles stiffen up?
- What should I watch for between injections if a dose is late?
- How will we keep track of my movements over the long run?

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.