

Pimavanserin

Nuplazid, an antipsychotic medicine that works in a different way

Pimavanserin quiets the hallucinations and false beliefs that can come with Parkinson's disease, without making movement worse.

WHAT IT TREATS

Parkinson's hallucinations

HOW YOU TAKE IT

Once daily, food not needed

WHEN IT WORKS

4 to 6 weeks

HABIT FORMING

No

⚠️ IMPORTANT SAFETY WARNING

Older adults with dementia who take antipsychotic medicines have a higher risk of death. Pimavanserin is only for hallucinations and delusions caused by Parkinson's disease, not for dementia on its own.

① WHAT THIS MEDICINE DOES

- **Pimavanserin** treats the hallucinations and false beliefs some people get with Parkinson's disease, like seeing people who are not there.
- It is the only medicine approved in the United States for this problem, and it does not block dopamine the way older antipsychotics do.
- Because it leaves dopamine alone, it should not stiffen your muscles or make your tremor, balance, or walking worse.
- It is not a cure for Parkinson's disease and it does not treat memory loss. It works on the hallucinations and false beliefs only.

🕒 HOW TO TAKE IT

- Take it once a day at about the same time. Food does not change how it works, so pick the time you will actually remember.
- Swallow the capsule whole. If you were given the smaller tablets instead, take both of them together as a single dose.
- If you miss a day, take it when you remember unless your next dose is close. Never double up to catch up on a missed dose.
- Store it at room temperature, away from heat and steam. A bathroom cabinet is usually the worst spot for medicine.
- Do not add any new medicine or herbal product, including St. John's wort, without telling your prescriber or pharmacist first.

📈 WHAT TO EXPECT

- This one works slowly. Give it **4 to 6 weeks** at the full dose before you decide whether it is helping you.
- Working looks like fewer hallucinations, or the same ones bothering you less. They may not disappear completely.
- Many people find the false beliefs fade first, and that calmer evenings and better sleep follow along with them.
- The medicine stays in your body a long time, so benefits and side effects both take a couple of weeks to settle after any change.
- Jot down how often the hallucinations happen each week. That simple note makes your follow-up visit far more useful.

♥️ COMMON SIDE EFFECTS

- Swelling in the ankles or feet is the most common effect. Put your feet up when sitting, and say so if your shoes feel tight.
- Feeling more confused or foggy can happen. Report it right away, because that is a common reason to change the plan.
- Nausea usually settles within a week or two. A small snack with the dose and cold water sipped slowly helps most people.
- Constipation is common. More water, more fiber, and a daily walk help, and your pharmacist can suggest a gentle stool softener.
- Some people feel less steady. Clear rugs and cords from walkways and use a stair rail until you know how it affects you.
- Odd dreams or lighter sleep may show up early on. A steady bedtime and no caffeine after lunch usually settle it down.

⚠️ CALL YOUR PRESCRIBER OR GET HELP RIGHT AWAY IF

- Call **911** for chest pain, fainting, or a heartbeat that races or pounds and will not settle down.
- Call your prescriber the same day if confusion, agitation, or hallucinations clearly get worse.
- New swelling along with shortness of breath or fast weight gain needs a same-day call to your prescriber.
- Go to the ER for high fever with stiff muscles, heavy sweating, and a racing pulse.

🚫 WHAT TO AVOID

- Alcohol adds to confusion and unsteadiness. If you drink at all, keep it small and talk it over with your prescriber.
- Do not drive until you know how this affects your alertness and balance, especially during the first few weeks.
- Some antibiotics, antifungals, and HIV medicines change how much of this drug is in you, so share your full medicine list.
- Medicines that change heart rhythm can stack with this one. Tell every new prescriber that you take **pimavanserin**.
- This medicine has not been studied in pregnancy. Tell your prescriber if you are pregnant, might be, or are breastfeeding.

⏸️ STOPPING IT SAFELY

- Do not stop on your own. Hallucinations often return, and your prescriber may want to step the dose down instead.
- It leaves the body slowly, so it can take **2 weeks or more** for the effects to fade after your last dose.
- If it has not helped after about **6 weeks**, that is real information. Bring it to your prescriber rather than quitting quietly.
- If illness or a hospital stay interrupts your doses, tell the team you take this so it gets restarted the right way.

❓ QUESTIONS TO ASK

- Should any of my Parkinson's medicines be lowered before we add this one?
- Do I need a heart tracing (an ECG) first, given the other medicines I take?
- How will we decide together whether this is working at my next visit?
- Which of my pills or supplements could clash with this medicine?

Where this information comes from

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National Library of Medicine. (2025). *DailyMed*. <https://dailymed.nlm.nih.gov/dailymed/>

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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.