

Phentermine information

How does phentermine work?

Phentermine is an appetite suppressant, and its hunger-suppressing effects are believed to occur through increased norepinephrine activity in the brain, particularly the hypothalamus.

How should I take phentermine?

It's recommended that phentermine be taken in the morning with breakfast. Taking it later in the day may increase the risk of insomnia.

What are the side effects of phentermine?

Phentermine is a stimulant and may cause the following:

- Insomnia (particularly if taken late in the day)
- Dry mouth
- Unpleasant taste in the mouth
- Palpitations
- Anxiety or agitation
- Increased heart rate

What should I do if I experience side effects?

If your symptoms are severe or concerning, you should stop phentermine and notify your provider. Patients taking phentermine 37.5 mg tablets can halve the tablets with a pill cutter and take one-half daily. If the symptoms resolve, a whole tablet may then be tried again.

Can phentermine raise blood pressure?

Since phentermine is a stimulant, it theoretically can raise blood pressure. However, studies have shown that blood pressure does not typically increase in patients receiving phentermine. Patients should check their blood pressure periodically after starting phentermine and report significant changes to their provider.

Conditions where phentermine should not be taken:

- Pregnant women or women who are trying to become pregnant
- Women who are breastfeeding
- Uncontrolled hypertension or phentermine-induced blood pressure increases
- Heart disease
- History of heart arrhythmia
- History of stroke or cerebrovascular disease
- Hyperthyroidism
- Significant liver or kidney disease
- With certain medications (see drug interactions below)

If I am having surgery, should I stop phentermine?

It is recommended that phentermine be held for at least 4 days before surgery.

Can phentermine cause heart problems?

In the 1990s, phentermine was combined with fenfluramine in the popular "Phen-fen" diet pill. Fenfluramine was later found to cause valvular heart disease and pulmonary hypertension. In 1997, the FDA pulled fenfluramine from the market and, at the same time, placed a warning about these events on phentermine. No evidence prior to or after that time has linked phentermine to these conditions. Furthermore, studies that have looked specifically for an association have found none.

Is phentermine addictive?

Phentermine is an atypical amphetamine analog and schedule IV controlled substance; however, abuse is not common. In a study of long-term phentermine users, psychological and physical addiction were not observed upon abrupt discontinuation.

How long can I take phentermine?

The prescribing information for phentermine recommends that it be taken for 3 months. In practice, many patients take it off and on or continuously for longer. Phentermine is also a part of the diet drug Qsymia (phentermine + topiramate), which has been taken for two years in studies. Furthermore, there is an ongoing study comparing two years of continuous phentermine to placebo.

Phentermine drug interactions

- **Caffeine** - phentermine and caffeine are both stimulants and combined use may increase the risk of side effects.
- **Nicotine** - nicotine and phentermine are both stimulants and combined use may increase the risk of side effects. Patients who smoke, vape, or use other forms of nicotine should stop or limit their use while taking phentermine.
- **MAO inhibitors (e.g. linezolid, selegiline)** - do not take phentermine with MAO inhibitors
- **Serotonergic medications (e.g. antidepressants, migraine medications)** - stimulants like phentermine have serotonergic activity and may potentiate the effects of other serotonergic medications. Most patients have no issues when combining serotonergic drugs, but rare cases of serotonin syndrome, a potentially fatal hyper-autonomic state, have been reported. Symptoms of serotonin syndrome include rapid heart rate, hypertension, confusion/agitation, fever, sweating, and tremor. Contact your provider immediately if you experience these symptoms.
- **Psychoactive medications** - phentermine works in the brain to suppress hunger. Any medication that has psychoactive effects (e.g. antidepressants, antipsychotics, seizure medications, insomnia drugs, bipolar medications, ADHD medications) may be affected by phentermine's stimulant properties.
- **Bupropion (Wellbutrin)** - bupropion can induce seizures in some patients, with an incidence of approximately 0.1% at doses of 300 mg/day. Phentermine can theoretically increase the risk of bupropion-induced seizures. While most people have no issues taking the medications together, patients should be aware of the potential interaction.
- **Other stimulants (e.g. ADHD medications)** - phentermine should not be taken with other stimulants, including ADHD drugs like Adderall