



# Risperidone

*What you should know about taking risperidone (Risperdal)*

Risperidone is also known by the brand names **Risperdal, Risperdal M-Tab, and Risperdal Consta.**

Risperidone is an atypical antipsychotic that acts on both the serotonergic and dopaminergic systems among others.

Risperidone is used to treat psychosis, schizophrenia, schizoaffective disorder, and bipolar disorder, especially the manic phase. It can also help with anxiety, difficulty sleeping, and to enhance the effect of antidepressants.

## What should my health care provider know before I take this medication?

Alert your provider if you are taking any other medication or if you are pregnant, breastfeeding, or plan to become pregnant. Also, tell your doctor if you have heart, liver or kidney disease.

## How do I take it?

Take this medication exactly as your provider prescribes. It is fine to take this medication with or without food.

If you have been prescribed the oral solution risperidone, do not mix it with cola or tea.

If you are taking the Risperdal M-tabs, do not split or chew the medication. Do not push the tablets through the foil as this may hurt the medication. Take the medication right away once it is removed from the package. You may swallow the M-tab with or without fluid.

## What are the possible side effects?

Feeling dizzy when you sit up or stand quickly, sedation, insomnia, weight gain, sexual dysfunction, and milk production from breasts are possible side effects.

Avoid long exposure to the sun, heavy exercise, high temperatures and dehydration. Risperidone could interfere with your body's ability to cool down.

At higher doses, risperidone can cause a sensation of restlessness with a need to move, muscle rigidity, tremor, or slow movements. Brief or prolonged contractions of muscles that result in abnormal movements or postures can also occur.

## Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or health care provider if you have questions or concerns. UWMC Clinic staff is also available to help at any time.

UW Outpatient  
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After hours or on the weekend call the UW Psychiatry resident on-call at 206-598-6190

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If taken for years, there is a very small risk of developing tardive dyskinesia (a permanent disorder of involuntary movement of the face, body, tongue, or jaw).

Other serious yet rare side effects include high blood sugar, strokes in the elderly, painful erection of the penis that will not return to normal and neuroleptic malignant syndrome (a temporary but serious disorder of muscle contractions linked with high fever and abnormal vital signs).

### When will it start working?

You may start to notice subtle improvement in your symptoms right away. The full effect of the medication will not be realized until you have taken a steady dose for weeks.

### What should I do if I miss a dose?

You should take it as soon as you remember unless it is within 2 hours of the next scheduled dose. In that case, skip the missed dose and take the next one as directed. Do not take double doses.

### When should I call my provider?

Call your provider, get emergency medical care, or call 911 if you:

- Feel suicidal or homicidal.
- Have an allergic reaction to your medication (hives, itching, rash, trouble breathing, tightness in chest, swelling of your lips, tongue, or throat).
- Have had a seizure.
- Have involuntary movements (facial or body twitching that you cannot control).
- Feel dizzy when you stand or sit up quickly and getting up slowly does not relieve the feeling.
- You are having high fever and muscle stiffness.

### Where can I learn more about risperidone?

- [www.risperdal.com](http://www.risperdal.com)

References: Micromedex, and *Handbook of Psychiatric Drug Therapy*, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition by Arana and Rosenbaum.

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