
PRAZOSIN (Minipress) Fact Sheet [G]

BOTTOM LINE:

Although there are only minimal data, consider prazosin for PTSD in kids, especially for PTSD-associated sleep disturbances and nightmares, but monitor BP.

PEDIATRIC FDA INDICATIONS:

None.

ADULT FDA INDICATIONS:

Hypertension.

OFF-LABEL USES:

PTSD; alcohol use disorder.

DOSAGE FORMS:

Capsules (G): 1 mg, 2 mg, 5 mg.

PEDIATRIC DOSAGE GUIDANCE:

- PTSD (off-label): Doses studied are 0.02–0.3 mg/kg given at bedtime; titrate dose slowly to minimize possibility of “first-dose” orthostatic hypotension. Start 1 mg QHS x3 days, increase slowly based on response. Target 1–5 mg/day; doses up to 15 mg daily studied in adults.
- May dose-divide BID to target daytime PTSD-associated arousal symptoms.

MONITORING: BP.**COST:** \$**SIDE EFFECTS:**

- Most common: Somnolence, dizziness, headache, weakness.
- Serious but rare: Orthostasis and syncope; prolonged erections and priapism have been reported.

MECHANISM, PHARMACOKINETICS, AND DRUG INTERACTIONS:

- Alpha-1 adrenergic receptor antagonist.
- Metabolism primarily hepatic (non-CYP450); $t_{1/2}$: 2–3 hours.
- Caution with other antihypertensive agents, diuretics, and PDE5 inhibitors (eg, Viagra) that may have additive hypotensive effects.

EVIDENCE AND CLINICAL PEARLS:

- Initial studies in adults showed improvement in trauma-related nightmares and sleep quality when dosed at bedtime. Subsequent randomized controlled trials have shown positive effects on daytime PTSD symptoms also when dosed BID.
- A retrospective chart review of 34 kids (5–18 years) with PTSD suggested prazosin is well tolerated and associated with improvements in nightmares and sleep.
- Prazosin failed to work in a more recent controlled trial of military veterans with chronic PTSD. This was the largest study to date on this drug, but it had some flaws: The placebo rate was unusually high, and the investigators may have enriched their sample with patients who were less likely to respond to prazosin.

FUN FACT:

Prazosin is an effective drug for kids in the treatment of serious scorpion envenomations with significant sympathetic symptoms.