
CYPROHEPTADINE (Periactin) Fact Sheet [G]

Bottom Line:

Cyproheptadine is sometimes effective in reversing SSRI-induced anorgasmia, but with continued use it could interfere with antidepressant efficacy. As-needed occasional use is the best strategy.

FDA Indications:

Allergic rhinitis; urticaria.

Off-Label Uses:

Antidepressant-induced sexual dysfunction; anorexia and bulimia nervosa; appetite stimulant; acute management of serotonin syndrome.

Dosage Forms:

- **Tablets (G):** 4 mg (scored).
- **Syrup (G):** 2 mg/5 mL syrup.

Dosage Guidance:

Take 4–12 mg one to two hours before sexual activity.

Monitoring: No routine monitoring recommended unless clinical picture warrants.

Cost: \$

Side Effects:

- Most common: Sedation, confusion, weight gain, anticholinergic effects, potential reversal of antidepressant therapeutic effect.
- Pregnancy/breastfeeding: Not enough data to recommend.

Mechanism, Pharmacokinetics, and Drug Interactions:

- Histamine H1 receptor antagonist with mild antiserotonergic effects.
- Metabolized primarily through hepatic glucuronidation via UGT1A; $t_{1/2}$: 16 hours.
- Avoid concomitant use with MAOIs. Additive effects with other sedating agents.

Clinical Pearls:

- Appears to work best for anorgasmia. Average effective dose in one study was 8.6 mg.
- Excessive sedation may impede therapeutic efficacy in some patients.

Fun Facts:

Cyproheptadine's antagonistic effects at serotonin receptors have been shown to be useful as part of the management of serotonin syndrome. It's been used to counteract the more rarely occurring serotonergic side effects of serotonergic antidepressants, such as sweating and vivid dreams. It is also the most commonly used appetite stimulant for cats.