
FLUPHENAZINE (Prolixin) Fact Sheet [G]

Bottom Line:

Fluphenazine is an effective, inexpensive first-generation antipsychotic with a long history of experience and use, but clinical utility is limited in some patients due to EPS.

FDA Indications:

Psychosis.

Off-Label Uses:

Bipolar disorder; behavioral disturbances; impulse control disorders.

Dosage Forms:

- **Tablets (G):** 1 mg, 2.5 mg, 5 mg, 10 mg.
- **Oral liquid (G):** 2.5 mg/5 mL.
- **Oral concentrate (G):** 5 mg/mL.
- **Injection (G):** 2.5 mg/mL.
- **Long-acting injection (G):** 25 mg/mL (see LAI fact sheet and table).

Dosage Guidance:

- Start 1–2.5 mg BID (5 mg BID for hospitalized patients); adjust to lowest effective dose. Dose range 2.5–20 mg/day divided BID; max FDA-approved dose is 40 mg/day, but doses >20 mg/day are difficult to tolerate and rarely more effective.
- Long-acting injection: See LAI fact sheet and table.

Monitoring: No routine monitoring recommended unless clinical picture warrants.

Cost: \$

Side Effects:

- Most common: EPS, headache, drowsiness, dry mouth, prolactin elevation (sexual side effects, amenorrhea, galactorrhea).
- Serious but rare: See class warnings in chapter introduction.
- Pregnancy/breastfeeding: Limited data suggest relative safety in pregnancy and breastfeeding.

Mechanism, Pharmacokinetics, and Drug Interactions:

- Dopamine D2 receptor antagonist.
- Metabolized primarily by CYP2D6; $t_{1/2}$: 15 hours. Poor metabolizers of CYP2D6 metabolize the drug more slowly; may have increased effects.
- CYP2D6 inhibitors (eg, fluoxetine, paroxetine, quinidine) may increase fluphenazine levels.

Clinical Pearls:

- Fluphenazine is a high-potency first-generation antipsychotic; this leads to more EPS compared to mid- or low-potency agents (eg, perphenazine or chlorpromazine, respectively) and to less sedation, less orthostasis, and fewer anticholinergic side effects compared to low-potency agents (eg, chlorpromazine).
- Relatively lower seizure side effect risk compared to lower-potency agents. Long-acting injectable decanoate formulation allows option for patients who don't take oral formulation reliably.
- Availability of short-acting injectable and oral liquid formulations also allows for more flexibility in administration.
- Oral concentrate liquid must be diluted with at least two ounces of a liquid such as milk, tomato juice, fruit juice (but not apple juice), or a soft drink that does not contain caffeine.

Fun Fact:

Prolixin is the most well-known brand of fluphenazine, but there was also a branded fluphenazine on the market under the name Permitil.