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## PRAZOSIN (Minipress) Fact Sheet [G]

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### Bottom Line:

Prazosin is an alpha-1 antagonist (FDA approved for hypertension) that has become popular as a treatment for PTSD-associated insomnia/nightmares. More recent studies have cast doubt on its efficacy for nightmares, but many clinicians still believe it is useful.

### FDA Indications:

Hypertension.

### Off-Label Uses:

PTSD; alcohol use disorder.

### Dosage Forms:

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

### Dosage Guidance:

- PTSD (off-label): Titrate dose slowly to minimize possibility of “first-dose” orthostatic hypotension. Start 1 mg QHS ×3 days, then 2 mg QHS ×4 days. If tolerating but still symptomatic, increase to 3 mg QHS ×7 days. Dose can be increased further, based on response, to 4 mg QHS ×7 days. Target 1–5 mg/day.
- May dose-divide BID to target daytime PTSD-associated arousal symptoms.

**Monitoring:** Periodic blood pressure.

**Cost:** \$

### Side Effects:

- Most common: Somnolence, dizziness, headache, weakness.
- Serious but rare: Orthostasis and syncope; prolonged erections and priapism have been reported.
- Pregnancy/breastfeeding: Likely relatively safe in pregnancy; not enough data to recommend in breastfeeding.

### Mechanism, Pharmacokinetics, and Drug Interactions:

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

### Clinical Pearls:

- Initial studies showed improvement in trauma-related nightmares and sleep quality when dosed at bedtime, as well as positive effects on daytime PTSD symptoms when dosed BID.
- 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 (Raskind MA et al, *N Engl J Med* 2018;378:507–517).
- Increasing data on efficacy in alcohol use disorder are promising, making prazosin a reasonable second-line option particularly for patients with any combination of anxiety, insomnia, nightmares, PTSD, or hypertension.

### Fun Fact:

Prazosin is an older drug that is now rarely used for its original indication (hypertension). Aside from its uses in psychiatry, it is used most often as a second-line agent for urinary hesitancy in benign prostatic hyperplasia.