

Dangers of Using Phentermine

MCC Patient Education Module

Phentermine is an isomer of methamphetamine. The drug acts as a potent substrate at the norepinephrine transporter simultaneously promoting the release of norepinephrine; it has a weaker activity at the dopamine transporter whereas its activity towards the serotonin transporter is negligible. Overall, the pharmacological action of phentermine is comparable to that of amphetamine albeit less strong.

Phentermine is used as an appetite suppressant and stimulant. It works in much the same way as amphetamines. Phentermine affects the central nervous system. Phentermine can have dangerous results if abused or used improperly. A person should never take Phentermine without first being evaluated by a qualified medical provider.

In extreme cases, when the benefits outweigh the risks, people who have diabetes or high cholesterol levels may be put on phentermine to assist in weight loss and lower the risks associated with some of these diseases. Phentermine can have dangerous results if abused or used improperly. The amphetamine-like pill is only recommended for use by those that have a significantly higher body mass index (BMI) than the normal range for their age and height.

Side Effects. Case reports have proposed that phentermine usage might be associated with severe health risks due to hypertension, vasoconstriction and vasculopathy; in some individuals, mental illness had been observed.

Phentermine has several side effects that range from mild to moderate. These side effects include insomnia, increased blood pressure, dizziness, dry mouth, nervousness, constipation, headache, dizziness, itching and diarrhea. If an individual has severe reactions like swelling, confusion, dangerously high blood pressure, chest pain and shortness of breath, the person should be seen by emergency personnel immediately.

In a study published in the Yonsei Medical Journal, researchers examined the possible link of anorectic drugs to pulmonary hypertension. A 29-year-old woman was admitted to the hospital for shortness of breath and diagnosed with pulmonary hypertension. Researchers unveiled that three months prior to her hospital admittance, she took phentermine for five weeks, which could provide a possible connection between phentermine and pulmonary hypertension.

Drinking alcohol may intensify the side effects of phentermine. Phentermine can make it hard to focus or remain alert. Do not take phentermine and drive or participate in activities that require your full attention.

Abuse. Phentermine can be habit-forming. Phentermine is known to be abused and diverted. Phentermine should not be prescribed to individuals with a history of substance use disorder.

Abruptly discontinuing the use of phentermine may lead to withdrawal symptoms. Exhaustion and depression may occur in patients who took phentermine for an extended period of time and then discontinued its use. If a person has taken phentermine for long periods of time, the dosage should be decreased gradually to avoid these reactions.

The United Nations International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) has warned phentermine users that anorectic drugs can be easily addicting, especially in women who are obsessed with becoming thin. "They've been around in various guises since the Sixties and are highly addictive", said Professor Hamid Ghodse, chairman of addiction psychiatry at St. George's Hospital, London to the Daily Mail. While people start to take them as an easy means to lose weight, it can also be just as easy to get hooked.

As one of the commonly abused drugs, phentermine can kill those who are "dying to be slim."

Due to its declining effect with time and its addiction potential, phentermine is only approved for short-term use for a period of 12 weeks or less. The potentially severe side effects are noticeable upon primary usage, but when one stops taking the pill, one will most likely regain the weight that was initially lost. As such, phentermine should not be used as a primary way to lose weight.

You might remember a weight loss drug called Fen-Phen. This dangerous diet pill was yanked from the market by the FDA in 1997 because of its association with serious cardiovascular problems. Phentermine was the "Phen" in Fen-Phen. Along with fenfluramine ("Fen"), the duo of ingredients was linked to heart and pulmonary emergencies, many of which resulted in death.

Risks. The risks associated with phentermine are numerous. Those who also take monoamine oxidase inhibitors, or a certain kind of antidepressant known as tricyclic antidepressants, should not take it because of the drug's effects on the cardiovascular system. When phentermine is taken alone, it may produce side effects like nausea, vomiting, dry mouth, heart palpitations, diarrhea, and constipation.

Phentermine is also addictive. And, for people who are trying to end their addiction to food, the last thing they need is another addiction to contend with.

Ban on Phentermin. The "fast weight-loss" drug has been banned in two countries due to its possible detrimental health effects. In 2012, the Food and Drug Administration approved the sale of phentermine while other countries continued to ban the diet pill.

Phentermine has been banned in the United Kingdom since 2000 after health officials learned that the use of the drug could possibly cause cardiovascular disease. According to the BBC, the "fast weight loss" diet pill has been linked to leakage in the heart valves. "This is in line with the directions of a European Commission safety review which found that the risks of developing hypertension or heart disorders outweighed the benefits of taking the drug," said a Department of Health spokeswoman to BBC News Online.