

PHENTERMINE INFORMATION SHEET

What is phentermine?

Phentermine is a prescription weight loss medication. It is an appetite suppressant. Individuals taking phentermine lose weight because they are less hungry and thus consume fewer calories. Phentermine does not cause you to burn fat and does not affect your metabolism.

How does phentermine work?

Phentermine suppresses appetite by changing the chemistry in the brain in a way that decreases the hunger drive. Specifically it alters levels of dopamine and norepinephrine, two chemicals involved with brain functioning.

If I take phentermine will I lose weight?

Phentermine is a powerful tool in the fight against excess weight. Millions of people have used phentermine to help them lose weight and keep it off. It can help you feel more in control of your appetite and food cravings. It can increase your satiety, which means that when you eat you will feel full sooner. And finally, it can help take your mind off food, so that you can think about other things. However, it is not a “magic pill”. It is important to remember that it is only a tool, and will work best if you also make healthy life style changes, such as modifying your diet and increasing your activity level. If you take phentermine and do not make lifestyle changes, you may lose some weight, but most likely your weight loss will plateau before you reach your goal, and with time you will regain the weight you have lost.

Does Phentermine burn calories or fat? No. Phentermine does not alter metabolism or cause your body to burn more fat.

Is phentermine safe?

Yes. Phentermine has been on the market since 1959 and has been taken by literally millions of patients. It has never been associated with a serious medical condition.

Is phentermine addictive?

No. Although, phentermine is chemically related to the amphetamine class of medications, there has never been a documented case of phentermine addiction. Even after long term use of phentermine it is possible to stop taking it abruptly without having physical cravings or other symptoms of withdrawal.

Is phentermine the same thing as fen/phen?

No. Fen/phen was a two drug combination of fenfluramine and phentermine. Fenfluramine is not related chemically to phentermine. Fenfluramine was taken off the market in 1997 because it was thought to cause in some patients a serious complication known as pulmonary hypertension. Phentermine has never been associated with pulmonary hypertension or any other medical complication.

Who can not take phentermine?

You can not take phentermine if you are pregnant, nursing or have had an allergic reaction to it. You also can not take phentermine if you have uncontrolled high blood pressure, have an abnormal heart rhythm needing medication, have had a heart attack, have epilepsy or have a history of amphetamine abuse. If you have glaucoma you must get the approval of your ophthalmologist prior to taking phentermine.

What if I get pregnant while taking phentermine?

Phentermine is not known to be harmful to a developing fetus. However, like many medications, studies have not been done to determine the safety of phentermine during pregnancy. Therefore, if you become pregnant while taking phentermine, you should stop it immediately.

How do I know if the phentermine I am taking is working?

At Health Plus if a patient taking phentermine is losing a minimum of 6 pounds every 3 months we consider that it is working? Once a patient has lost 10% of their original weight (their weight when they started taking phentermine), if they maintain that weight loss we consider the medication to still be working.

How long can I take phentermine?

The FDA originally approved phentermine for up to 6 weeks of use. This was because the drug trials done on phentermine were only 6 weeks long. If it is used for more than six weeks, this is considered an “off-label” use. However, after several decades of use in literally millions of patients, there has never been any evidence that long term use is dangerous. At Health Plus we feel that if phentermine is helping an individual reach and maintain a healthy weight it makes sense to continue it. This approach is similar to any other medication used to treat a chronic medical condition. For instance, if an individual is prescribed a medication to treat diabetes or high blood pressure, it does not make sense to discontinue the medication after 6 weeks if it is working.

If I take phentermine too long will it stop working?

There is no yes or no answer to this question. This may vary from individual to individual. Many patients have reported that after a while the medication seems less effective. Whether this is due the diminishing effect of the medication, or because these individuals are paying less attention to their diet is unknown. Some patients have found that if they stop taking phentermine for a month or two, that when they start taking it again, it regains its effectiveness.

What happens when I stop taking phentermine?

When you stop taking phentermine, especially if you stop abruptly, you may notice an increase in your hunger and food cravings. Otherwise, you will probably not notice any other effect. Many patients are able to maintain their weight loss after stopping phentermine. However, some patients will start to regain weight they have lost after they stop taking phentermine. It is important to remember that this is not your fault. If you gain weight after stopping phentermine you may be a candidate for more long term use of this medication.

What side effects does phentermine have?

Stimulation: Phentermine is a stimulant and many patients report feeling “speedy” or having extra energy while taking the medications. Many patients find this side effect to be desirable. Occasionally, patients find it unpleasant. In either case, the stimulant effect of the medication decreases with time.

Dry Mouth: Most patients will experience some degree of dry mouth while taking phentermine. This is rarely severe enough to pose a problem. This side effect will help remind you to increase your water intake.

Insomnia: Because it is a stimulant, phentermine will most likely keep you awake if you take it too late in the day. This side effect also decreases in most patients after they have been on the medication for several weeks.

Irritability: Occasionally patients will notice that they are more irritable while taking phentermine. This side effect may be more common in men. Very rarely a patient may need to stop taking phentermine because of this side effect.

Constipation: Occasionally patients will have a problem with constipation while taking phentermine. This occurs most often in individuals who have had prior problems with constipation. If you eat a high fiber diet and drink lots of water it is less likely to occur. It is very rare for phentermine to need to be discontinued because of this problem. Individuals who have irritable bowel syndrome may find their symptoms improved with phentermine.

Increased Heart Rate: Your heart rate may increase slightly while taking phentermine. You probably will not notice this unless you count your pulse rate. This increased heart rate is not dangerous. Heart rate generally goes down with weight loss. Caffeine increases the likelihood that you will notice this side effect.

Jitteriness: Due to its stimulant effect phentermine can make some patients to feel jittery or shaky. This side effect generally decreases with time. The jitteriness caused by phentermine is much less severe that associated with many over the counter diet medications.

Other: The following side effects have been reported on very rare occasions with phentermine: Headaches, reversible hair loss, depression, urinary retention, panic disorder, or blurred vision.

Does phentermine interact with any other medications?

It is safe to take phentermine while taking most other medications or combination of medicines. Certain medications may increase the side effects associated with phentermine, such as dry mouth and increased heart rate. It is important to review all the medications you are taking with the health care provider prescribing phentermine.

What about caffeine?

Both phentermine and caffeine are stimulants. They both can cause insomnia, increased heart rate and jitteriness. It is likely that if you use caffeine while taking phentermine these side effects will be increased. It is recommended that you limit your caffeine use while taking phentermine. This is particularly important during the first week or two you are taking phentermine.

What about alcohol?

There is no known interaction between phentermine and alcohol. Some individuals have reported that while taking phentermine they feel the intoxicating effects of alcohol quicker. Therefore, it is especially important while taking phentermine not to drive after having even one drink. Also, remember that if you are trying to lose weight, alcohol is not your friend. It has a lot of calories, is an appetite stimulant and decreases your will power.

What about dose?

The dose of phentermine approved by the FDA is up to 37.5mg per day. Any dose greater than that is considered an “off label” use. The amount of phentermine needed for maximum benefit varies with each individual.

What time of day should I take phentermine?

Generally it is best to take phentermine shortly after you wake up. Many patients take half a pill before breakfast and the other half shortly before lunch. This spreads the medication out more evenly throughout the day and allows it to work in to the evening when many people have their worst cravings. The closer you take phentermine to the time you go to bed, the more likely it is to keep you awake. Generally, it is not advised to take phentermine less than 8 hours before bedtime.

How long does phentermine stay in my body?

Phentermine is a long acting medication. While its peak appetite suppressant effect occurs after an hour or two, in most cases it remains effective for 6 to 8 hours or longer. It takes more than 24 hours for the medication to be completely eliminated from the body.

Pills vs. Capsules

Phentermine is available in both 30mg capsules, 37.5mg tablets, and occasionally 15mg capsules. The 37.5mg has the advantage of being scored down the middle, making it easy to break in two.

Why do my pills look different than when I have gotten it in the past?

Phentermine is manufactured by multiple different pharmaceutical companies. Each company's makes their product look different than their competitors. Theoretically, there should be no difference in chemical structure, strength or effectiveness between one brand of phentermine and another.

Is there a difference between generic and brand name phentermine?

Phentermine has been off patent for many years. The only difference between “brand” name phentermine, like Adipex, Fastin and Ionamin, and generic phentermine is price.

Where should I purchase my phentermine?

Phentermine is available at most pharmacies. There is wide variation in the price between pharmacies, and if cost is an issue it is recommended that you call several pharmacies for a price quote.