Generic Periactin (Cyproheptadine)

Product introduction

Cyproheptadine has been part of allergy care for decades, and it does something most antihistamines do not. As well as blocking histamine, it blocks serotonin, another chemical involved in itching and some skin reactions. That double action makes it useful when standard tablets have not quite done the job.

Generic Periactin contains cyproheptadine hydrochloride, usually as a 4 mg tablet. It is a first-generation antihistamine, so it does cause drowsiness, and it is known for increasing appetite.

Quick facts

Active ingredient	Cyproheptadine hydrochloride
Form and strength	Tablets, 4 mg
Medicine type	Sedating antihistamine
Used for	Allergic rhinitis, hives, itching
Habit forming	No

Uses of Cyproheptadine

- Seasonal and year-round nasal allergies
- Allergic conjunctivitis (red, itchy, watering eyes)
- Hives and itchy skin conditions
- Cold urticaria, where hives appear after exposure to cold
- Itching from mild reactions to food, insect bites or medicines

Benefits of Cyproheptadine

Relief for stubborn itching

By blocking both histamine and serotonin, cyproheptadine can quieten itching and hives that have not responded well to other antihistamines. It is also used for hives triggered by cold.

Drier nose and eyes

It reduces sneezing and dries up a runny nose and watery eyes. Its sedating effect can help people whose symptoms keep them awake.

Why doctors choose it

- Works on two itch-causing chemicals, not one
- Helps cold-induced hives

- Can ease night-time itching and improve sleep
- Available as tablets and as a liquid

How Cyproheptadine works

Histamine and serotonin are both released during allergic and inflammatory reactions. Histamine drives sneezing, itching and swelling, and serotonin can add to itching and to some skin and blood vessel reactions.

Cyproheptadine blocks the receptors for both. It also has a drying effect on the nose and eyes. Because it enters the brain, it makes people sleepy and can raise appetite. Most people feel it working within an hour or two.

How to take Cyproheptadine

Swallow the tablets with water, with or without food, spacing doses evenly through the day as your doctor advises. If sleepiness is a problem, your doctor may move more of the daily amount to bedtime.

Dosage

Your doctor will decide your dose. Adults often start with 4 mg three times a day, adjusted according to response, and most need between 12 mg and 16 mg a day in total. Children take lower doses based on age and weight, only under medical guidance. Older adults are more sensitive to side effects and usually start low.

Side effects of Cyproheptadine

The most common side effects are:

- Drowsiness
- Bigger appetite and weight gain
- Dry mouth, nose or throat
- Dizziness
- Thicker mucus in the chest
- Constipation or difficulty passing urine

Less often, people may have blurred vision, confusion, a fast heartbeat or restlessness. Children sometimes become excitable rather than sleepy. Get urgent help for a rash with swelling, breathing difficulty, fainting or a seizure.

Safety advice

Condition	Advice	Details
Alcohol	**UNSAFE**	Alcohol adds to the drowsiness caused by cyproheptadine. Avoid it during treatment.

Condition	Advice	Details
Pregnancy	**CONSULT YOUR DOCTOR**	Use it in pregnancy only if your doctor advises it.
Breastfeeding	**UNSAFE**	Cyproheptadine should not be used while breastfeeding.
Driving	**CAUTION**	It commonly causes sleepiness. Do not drive if you feel drowsy.
Kidney	**CAUTION**	Tell your doctor about kidney problems, as the dose may need changing.
Liver	**CAUTION**	Tell your doctor about liver problems, as the dose may need changing.

What if you forget to take Cyproheptadine?

Take the missed dose when you remember, unless the next one is close. If it is, leave it out and keep to your normal timetable. Two doses together will only make drowsiness worse.

Drug interactions

Tell your doctor or pharmacist if you take:

- MAO inhibitor antidepressants, which must not be combined with it
- SSRI antidepressants such as fluoxetine, whose effect may be reduced
- Sleeping tablets, sedatives or opioid painkillers
- Other antihistamines
- Alcohol

Precautions

Cyproheptadine is not right for everyone. Check with your doctor first if you:

- Have glaucoma
- Have an enlarged prostate or trouble passing urine
- Have a stomach or bowel blockage, or a stomach ulcer
- Have asthma, high blood pressure, heart disease or an overactive thyroid
- Are over 65
- Are pregnant or breastfeeding

It must never be given to newborn or premature babies.

Storage

Keep the tablets in their original pack at room temperature, away from moisture, heat and direct light. Store them where children cannot reach.

Quick tips

- Expect some sleepiness, especially at the start.
- Watch your weight, as appetite often increases.
- Avoid alcohol completely.
- Older adults should start on a low dose.
- Never give it to newborn or premature babies.

Frequently asked questions

Why does cyproheptadine make me hungrier?

Blocking serotonin in the brain can increase appetite. If weight gain becomes a worry, talk to your doctor.

Is it a non-drowsy antihistamine?

No, it is a sedating one. For daytime relief without sleepiness, a newer antihistamine may suit you better.

Can I take it with other allergy medicines?

Only on medical advice. Combining it with another sedating antihistamine can make side effects much stronger.

Conclusion

Generic Periactin (cyproheptadine) is a useful option when allergy symptoms and itching have not settled with other antihistamines, thanks to its action on both histamine and serotonin. It does cause drowsiness and can boost appetite, so it is best used with a doctor's guidance. Avoid alcohol, be careful with other sedating medicines, and stick to the dose you are given.

Disclaimer: This page shares general health information. It is not a substitute for personal advice from your own doctor or pharmacist, so read the pack leaflet before use.