

Tetrabenazine tablets (Xenazine)

The dose of tetrabenazine varies from person to person. Your doctor will tell you how you should take the tablets.

Swallow your doses with a drink of water. You can take tetrabenazine either before or after food.

Tetrabenazine can cause unwanted effects such as depression, feeling drowsy, slow muscle movements, and stiffness. Let your doctor know if this happens to you.

About tetrabenazine tablets

Used for	Movement disorders
Also called	Xenazine®
Available as	Tablets

Tetrabenazine acts on your brain and nervous system. It is used to treat uncontrolled jerky muscle movements associated with a conditions such as [Huntington's chorea](#) and tardive dyskinesia.

We do not know exactly how tetrabenazine works, but it is known to reduce the levels of a chemical in brain cells, called dopamine. Dopamine is involved in controlling our muscles so lower levels in the brain mean reduced muscle movements.

Before taking tetrabenazine tablets

Some medicines are not suitable for people with certain conditions, and sometimes a medicine can only be used if extra care is taken. For these reasons, before you start taking tetrabenazine it is important that your doctor knows:

- If you are pregnant or breastfeeding.
- If you have any problems with the way your liver works, or if you have any problems with the way your kidneys work.
- If you know you have problems with your heart rhythm.
- If you have depression.
- If you have Parkinson-like symptoms.
- If you have been told you have a tumour on your adrenal gland, called phaeochromocytoma, or if you have any other cancer.
- If you are taking or using any other medicines. This includes any medicines which are available to buy without a prescription, as well as herbal and complementary medicines.
- If you have ever had an allergic reaction to a medicine.

How to take tetrabenazine tablets

- Before you start the treatment, read the manufacturer's printed information leaflet from inside the pack. It will give you more information about tetrabenazine, and will also provide you with a full list of the side-effects which you could experience from taking it.

- Take tetrabenazine tablets exactly as your doctor tells you to. Your dose will be adjusted to suit your condition, so your doctor will tell you how many tablets to take each day. This information will also be printed on the label of the pack to remind you about what the doctor said to you. As a guide, you could be asked to take either one, two or three doses each day.
- Swallow the tablet with a drink of water. You can take it either with or without food.
- Try to take the tablets at the same time(s) each day, as this will help you to remember to take your doses regularly.
- If you forget to take a dose, take it as soon as you remember (unless it is nearly time for your next dose, in which case leave out the missed dose and take the next dose as normal). Do not take two doses together to make up for a forgotten dose.

Getting the most from your treatment

- Try to keep your regular appointments with your doctor. This is so your doctor can check on your progress.
- Treatment with tetrabenazine is usually long-term. Continue to take the tablets unless you are advised otherwise. Stopping suddenly can cause problems and your doctor may want you to reduce your dose gradually if this becomes necessary.
- Tetrabenazine can cause you to feel drowsy. You should not drink alcohol as this can make the sleepiness worse.

Can tetrabenazine cause problems?

Along with their useful effects, most medicines can cause unwanted side-effects although not everyone experiences them. The table below contains some of the most common ones associated with tetrabenazine. You will find a full list in the manufacturer's information leaflet supplied with your medicine. The unwanted effects often improve as your body adjusts to the new medicine, but speak with your doctor or pharmacist if any of the following continue or become troublesome.

<p>Very common tetrabenazine side-effects (these affect more than 1 in 10 people)</p>	<p>What can I do if I experience this?</p>
<p>Feeling depressed, unusual muscle movements</p>	<p>Speak with your doctor about either of these straightaway</p>
<p>Common tetrabenazine side-effects (these affect fewer than 1 in 10 people)</p>	<p>What can I do if I experience this?</p>
<p>Feeling sleepy or drowsy</p>	<p>Do not drive and do not use tools or machines while affected. Do not drink alcohol</p>
<p>Feeling dizzy or light-headed particularly when you get up (due to low blood pressure)</p>	<p>Getting up and moving more slowly may help. If you begin to feel dizzy, sit down and rest for a few minutes</p>
<p>Feeling sick (nausea), stomach upset</p>	<p>Stick to simple meals - avoid fatty or spicy foods</p>
<p>Feeling anxious or confused, difficulty sleeping, difficulty swallowing</p>	<p>If any of these become troublesome, speak with your doctor</p>

Important: if you experience any of the following rare but serious symptoms, contact your doctor for advice straightaway as you may be developing a condition called neuroleptic malignant syndrome: muscle stiffness, a high temperature (fever), sweating, feeling very confused and looking pale.

If you experience any other symptoms which you think may be due to the tablets, speak with your doctor or pharmacist for further advice.

How to store tetrabenazine

- Keep all medicines out of the reach and sight of children.

- Store in a cool, dry place, away from direct heat and light.

Important information about all medicines

Never take more than the prescribed dose. If you suspect that you or someone else might have taken an overdose of this medicine, go to the accident and emergency department of your local hospital at once. Take the container with you, even if it is empty.

If you are having an operation or any dental treatment, tell the person carrying out the treatment which medicines you are taking.

This medicine is for you. Never give it to other people even if their condition appears to be the same as yours.

If you buy any medicines 'over the counter', always check with a pharmacist that they are suitable to take with your prescribed medicines.

Do not keep-out-of date or unwanted medicines. Take them to your local pharmacy which will dispose of them for you.

If you have any questions about this medicine ask your pharmacist.

If you experience side effects, you can report them online through the [Yellow Card website](#).

Further reading

- [Manufacturer's PIL, Tetrabenazine 25 mg Tablets](#); Ranbaxy (UK) Ltd (a Sun Pharmaceutical Company), The electronic Medicines Compendium. Dated August 2021.
- [Medicines Complete BNF 88th Edition](#); British Medical Association and Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain, London.

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