

Class

Antihistamine

Pharmacologic properties

Diphenhydramine is a histamine H1-receptor antagonist that prevents the release of histamine from effector mast cells. Histamine is a vasoactive substance central to allergic reactions that induces vasodilation, vascular permeability, and bronchoconstriction. Diphenhydramine prevents histamine-mediated responses, particularly the effects of histamine on the smooth muscle of the bronchial airways, skin, gastrointestinal tract, and blood vessels.

Indications

- Acute allergic reactions (mild, moderate, or severe) [Protocol 17](#), [Protocol 17P](#).
- Anaphylaxis [Protocol 17](#), [Protocol 17P](#).
- Acute dystonic reactions associated with ingestion of phenothiazines and related drugs (haloperidol, thorazine, compazine, metaclopramide, ziprasidone) [Protocol 17](#), [Protocol 17P](#).

Contraindications

- Benadryl is not to be used in newborn or premature infants or in nursing mothers
- Known hypersensitivity to diphenhydramine or antihistamines

Precautions:

- May cause significant sedation or paradoxical excitation/akathisia
- Diphenhydramine has additive effects with alcohol and other CNS depressants
- Antihistamines may cause dizziness, confusion, delirium, hallucinations, and/or hypotension in the elderly (60 years or older)
- Diphenhydramine has an atropine-like action (anti-cholinergic) and therefore should be used with caution in patients with a history of bronchial asthma, increased intraocular pressure, narrow angle glaucoma, hyperthyroidism, patients taking MAOIs, cardiovascular disease or hyper-tension

Side Effects/Adverse Reactions

- Drowsiness, sedation, Confusion, Vertigo, Hyperactivity in children, Palpitations, Tachycardia, PVC's, Hypotension, Nausea, Vomiting, Diarrhea, Dry mouth, Constipation, Thickening of bronchial secretion



Dosage and Administration

Adult

- 25 mg slow IVP or IM
 - May be repeated once in 5 min. if symptoms do not subside.

Pediatric

- 1 mg/kg slow IV/IO or IM (MAX 25 mg - Do not exceed adult dose)
 - May be repeated once in 5 min. if symptoms do not subside.