



Mid-Valley Behavioral Care Network

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Risperidone (Risperdal)

The medication Risperidone (**Risperdal**) is an **atypical** neuroleptic. It is used to treat psychosis. Psychosis can be experienced as disorganized thinking or behavior and unusual perceptions (hearing voices, seeing things, feeling paranoid). Risperdal is also used to treat mood instability associated with manic-depressive disorder also known as Bipolar Affective Disorder. Symptoms including poor sleep, racing thoughts and severe mood swings can be reduced with Risperdal. Generally these symptoms interfere with your life goals. There may be other reasons someone takes Risperdal.

Risperdal is FDA approved for Schizophrenia in adolescents and adults, Bipolar Affective Disorder and mania in adults and pediatric patients, and irritability associated with Autism in pediatric patients.

Although Risperdal can be very helpful, it can cause some side effects that you should know of before accepting treatment with it. The most common include: **drowsiness and sedation and weight gain; insomnia or agitation; blood pressure changes; sexual dysfunction; restlessness**. Although these effects generally occur during initial treatment, some remain throughout treatment and may warrant discontinuing the medication. Talk with your provider about it.

Recently, neuroleptics have been found to be associated with diabetes and weight gain, high cholesterol, and high triglycerides. Specifically, Risperdal can cause problems in this area. These problems can lead to obesity and cardiovascular issues. Though serious, these side effects are uncommon. Nevertheless, it is important to talk to your provider about these issues. Although very effective at treating symptoms, these potential side effects warrant you watching what you eat, and getting your blood sugar, cholesterol, and triglycerides checked occasionally.

Again, Risperdal is generally a well-tolerated medication which works well at helping people restore their lives, but these other issues are serious. Talk to your provider about it.

Risperdal is **different** from older **typical neuroleptics** in that it is less likely to cause EPS (ExtraPyramidal Side effects). But in the rare instances that these may occur they include resting tremor, muscle stiffness or spasms, abnormal movements of the mouth, tongue, extremities. These are usually benign and can be treated with side effect medication. Tardive Dyskinesia (unusual movements of the mouth, tongue, arms) and NMS (high fever, racing heart, agitation, sweating) although rare, are serious side effects of the older **typical** neuroleptics. These effects are considerably lower with Risperdal.

The beneficial effect of Risperdal can sometimes take 3-5 days to three weeks, sometimes longer. The maximum effect can sometimes take as long as 9-12 months. Generally if no effect is felt after 6 weeks, then a different medication or different dosage should be considered. The usual dosage range is 2- 4 mg/ day.

Recently, Risperdal came out in a long-acting injection (Risperdal Consta). Using the injection, people find it much easier to stay on their medication. (You would not have to take it every day, just get an injection every two weeks which means more freedom day to day!). Also, this form seems to have fewer side effects associated with it. The usual dosage range of the injection is 25- 50 mg every two weeks.

Risperdal is generally safe with other medications. But as with all medications, please let your provider know if you are engaged in other treatments. There are no dietary restrictions.

There are supplemental ways to improve life which include:

- exercise**
- good sleep habits**
- good eating habits**
- yoga**
- a hobby**

-visiting with family or friends

-psychotherapy

-fish oil daily

Although important, these methods alone cannot restore clear thinking and stable mood.

If you have further questions about this medication, please ask your medical provider or your pharmacist.

Original:	08/2011	Last reviewed:	06/2012				
		Last revised:	08/2011				