

Medication Information Sheet



Armodafanil/modafanil

brands: Nuvigil® / Provigil®

Medications are only ONE part of a successful treatment plan. They are appropriate when they provide benefit, improve function and have either no or mild, manageable side effects. Importantly, medications (even if natural) are chemical substances not expected in the body, and as such have side effects. Some of the side effects might be unknown. The use of medications/drugs for any purpose requires patient consent. This practice does NOT require a patient to use any medication.

Information & potential benefits

Both modafanil and armodafanil work on certain receptors in the brain's sleep-wake center. They are not stimulants like the amphetamines. They can be used daily or as needed. It does not appear that there is a withdrawal when the medication is stopped and it does not appear that there is a physiological dependence or tolerance. These medications are used to treat sleep-wake cycle disorders. Nuvigil is FDA approved for excessive sleepiness and fatigue associated with shift-work sleep disorder, sleep apnea and narcolepsy. Other uses are off-label. It is within the standard of care to use it for other conditions with excessive sleepiness or fatigue, such as multiple sclerosis, fibromyalgia, depression and other conditions. These uses are not currently FDA approved, however.

Potential risks and side effects

Because these are not stimulants, studies have shown a rise in blood pressure or some other effects like stimulants. Still, there are potential side effects. Headache (especially for the first few days) and nausea are the most likely side effects. Theoretically, based on the way the medication works in the body, it should not affect the heart, but caution is always appropriate. There were rare circumstances of a serious allergic-type rash. If any patient develops anything even close to a rash, the prescribing provider should be notified immediately and the drug should be stopped. They should be used with caution if there are any liver problems. There are interactions with other medications: Antifungals, Phenobarbital, barbiturates, Tegretol, cyclosporins, linezolid, MAO inhibitors, birth control pills, Dilantin, rifampin, tacrolimus, theophyllines, Coumadin and other medications may interact. Oral contraceptives may not work as well. Nuvigil helps reduce excessive sleepiness and fatigue. As with many drugs sometimes used in patients with depression, there is the possibility that the medication could worsen depression; if this occurs, the prescribing provider should be notified immediately.

Dosing information

Armodafanil and modafanil are fairly costly medications. They may not be covered by many insurance plans and we cannot guarantee that we will be able to obtain coverage for you. For armodafanil, most patients use 150mg per day. Doses range from 50mg to 250mg per day. For modafanil, most patients use 200mg per day.

Important information

Disclaimer: This is for informational purposes only. This does not replace the instructions you received from your provider, does not constitute initiation of medical treatment or establishment of a patient-physician relationship, does not constitute any form of recommendation, prescription or medical advice, and does not imply that the medication is appropriate or FDA approved for any condition. This information is not a complete listing of instructions, doses, uses or side effects. If this was prescribed to you, you must review this information with your pharmacist and prescriber before starting the medication. Any medication may interfere with the ability to drive, concentrate or operate machinery; patients must be responsible for their own behavior and should not engage in any dangerous activity if there is any question of impairment. All medications have side effects and drug interactions, some serious, some fatal. Let all of your practitioners and pharmacists know about every substance used. Alcohol, herbals or illegal drugs are not considered safe with these medications. Assume no medication is safe during pregnancy or while breast feeding. The medication may interfere with birth control. Almost any medication can cause sleepiness, insomnia, dizziness, confusion, hallucinations, anxiety, panic, constipation or diarrhea, headache, chest pain and nausea or vomiting, among others. Most medications should NOT be stopped suddenly because of the risk of withdrawal.