

Demerol (meperidine) basics

Treats moderate to severe pain. Demerol (meperidine) is not considered a first line option for pain management, and is typically only tried when other options haven't worked for you.

What to expect when starting

Here's when people typically experience benefits as well as some possible side effects. Your experience may be different.



† Data on frequency of side effects is not available.

Tips from pharmacists

- Demerol (meperidine) interacts with many medications, and can cause deadly breathing problems. Talk to your doctor or pharmacist before starting a new prescription or over the counter medication to avoid dangerous interactions.
- Don't take Demerol (meperidine) with alcohol or products that contain alcohol.
- If you have been taking Demerol (meperidine) for a long time, you may have withdrawal symptoms if you stop taking it abruptly. If you want to stop taking Demerol (meperidine), talk to your doctor first.
- Demerol (meperidine) can cause drowsiness and dizziness. Until you know how Demerol (meperidine) affects you, avoid driving and using machinery that requires you to be alert.

Risks and warnings

The FDA has identified these as possible serious or life-threatening risks with this medication. Contact your doctor if you experience any of these.

Death from lack of oxygen to the body (respiratory depression)

Taking too much of Demerol (meperidine) can cause irregular or slow breathing that can put you in a coma and can cause death. Demerol (meperidine) pills should be swallowed whole, don't crush or chew. Don't take more than your doctor prescribes. Always check with your doctor before starting any new medicines or supplements.

Tolerance, dependence, and addiction

Demerol (meperidine) has a high risk of addiction, abuse, misuse, overdose, and death. Your body can develop tolerance to Demerol (meperidine), which means that more medicine is needed to treat the same pain. You may become physically dependent on Demerol (meperidine) if you have been using it continuously, which means that you'll feel withdrawal symptoms if you stop taking it. You can avoid withdrawal by weaning off of the medication very slowly with the help of a doctor. Take only the prescribed dose. People with a history of drug abuse shouldn't take Demerol (meperidine) if an alternative medicine is available.

Interactions with other drugs

Demerol (meperidine) can interact with your other medicines, which can change how it affects your body and pain overall. Some medications can increase the concentration of Demerol (meperidine) or prolong adverse drug effects and cause potentially fatal respiratory depression (slowed breathing). Other medicines can decrease the drug concentration and inadequately control your pain. Talk to your doctor or pharmacist in order to optimize your medication regimen. While taking Demerol (meperidine), don't start any new prescription or over the counter medications until confirming with your doctor or pharmacist that it is safe to do so.

