

Dilaudid (hydromorphone) basics

Treats moderate to severe pain. Dilaudid (hydromorphone) is a powerful pain reliever that has significant risks for abuse and overdose.

What to expect when starting

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

	Hours	Days	Weeks	Months	Long term
Dilaudid (hydromorphone) Drug effectiveness	[Blue gradient bar from Hours to Months]				
Possible side effects†	Hours	Days	Weeks	Months	Long term
Dizziness	[Red gradient bar from Hours to Months]				
Drowsiness	[Red gradient bar from Hours to Months]				
Nausea	[Red gradient bar from Hours to Days]				
Vomiting	[Red gradient bar from Hours to Months]				
Constipation		[Red gradient bar from Days to Long term]			
Slowed breathing	[Red gradient bar from Hours to Days]				

† Data on frequency of side effects is not available.

Tips from pharmacists

- Don't take more or for longer than is recommended by your doctor. Doing so can lead to dependence and/or accidental overdose.
- Store the medicine in a safe place. Keep away from children or pets.
- Avoid combining with alcohol or muscle relaxants. This combination can be deadly.
- Dilaudid (hydromorphone) can make you dizzy or drowsy. Avoid driving or operating heavy machinery until you know how Dilaudid (hydromorphone) affects you.
- Use stool softener and/or laxative to help with constipation.
- Use a calibrated measuring device to administer the correct dose if using liquid formulation.

Risks and warnings

This drug carries significant risks, including addiction.

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

Slowed breathing

Taking too much Dilaudid (hydromorphone) can slow down your breathing, which can be fatal. You are at greater risk if you take alcohol, other opioid drugs, or muscle relaxants with Dilaudid (hydromorphone). If you start to feel like you can't breathe or your lips and fingers are turning blue, call 911 immediately.

Death from overdose

Even one dose of Dilaudid (hydromorphone) can be lethal to children or adults who are used to taking this medication. Keep it out of reach from children. If you suspect your child has taken Dilaudid (hydromorphone), watch for signs of fatigue, sleepiness, and slowed breathing. Call 911 immediately.

Death of newborn babies from opioid withdrawal

Let your doctor know if you were exposed to Dilaudid (hydromorphone) during pregnancy. Your baby may need special care after birth to prevent potentially fatal withdrawal symptoms.