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Prochlorperazine (Buccastem, Stemetil)

Prochlorperazine is prescribed for a number of different reasons. Ask your doctor if you are unsure why it has been prescribed for you.

It may slow your reactions and make you feel drowsy. If this happens, do not drive and do not use tools or machines.

Keep any regular appointments with your doctor. This is so your progress can be checked.

About prochlorperazine

Type of medicine	A phenothiazine medicine
Used for	The treatment of dizziness and problems with balance; the treatment of nausea and vomiting; to ease agitation and severe restlessness; schizophrenia
Also called	Buccastem® M; Stemetil®
Available as	Tablet, buccal tablet (dissolves in the mouth) and injection

Prochlorperazine belongs to a group of medicines called 'phenothiazines'. It is prescribed for a variety of unrelated conditions, including problems with [balance and dizziness](#), sickness (nausea and vomiting), agitation and restlessness, and [schizophrenia](#). Prochlorperazine is thought to work by blocking the action of a chemical called dopamine which acts on the nervous system in the brain.

Prochlorperazine is also available to buy over-the-counter from pharmacies. It comes as a buccal tablet (dissolves in the mouth) that is used to relieve sickness caused by [migraine](#).

Before taking prochlorperazine

Some medicines are not suitable for people with certain conditions, and sometimes a medicine may only be used if extra care is taken. For these reasons, before you start taking prochlorperazine it is important that your doctor knows:

- If you are pregnant or breastfeeding.
- If you have a heart condition or blood vessel disease.
- If you have liver, kidney, or prostate problems.
- If you have breathing problems.
- If you have problems with your thyroid gland.
- If you have any of the following: epilepsy, Parkinson's disease, depression, increased pressure in your eye (glaucoma), or myasthenia gravis, a condition which causes muscle weakness.
- If you have ever had yellowing of your skin or the whites of your eyes (jaundice) or a blood disorder.
- If you have a tumour on your adrenal gland, a condition called phaeochromocytoma.
- If you have ever had an allergic reaction to a medicine.
- If you are taking or using any other medicines. This includes any medicines you are taking which are available to buy without a prescription, as well as herbal and complementary medicines.

How to take prochlorperazine

- Before you start this treatment, read the manufacturer's printed information leaflet from inside your pack. The manufacturer's leaflet will give you more information about prochlorperazine and a full list of the side-effects which you may experience from taking it.

- Take prochlorperazine exactly as your doctor tells you to. Your dose will depend upon the reason you are taking it, but as a guide, it is often taken two or three times daily. If you are prescribed a regular dose, try to get into the habit of taking it at the same times each day to avoid missing any doses. Prochlorperazine can also be taken 'as required' when treating sickness.
- **If you have been supplied the standard 5 mg tablets** – take these in the normal way by swallowing them with a glass of water. You can take prochlorperazine 5 mg tablets before or after meals.
- **If you have been supplied the 3 mg buccal tablets (Buccastem® M brand)** – the tablets are designed to stick to the inside of your mouth and to dissolve there. Place the tablet in your mouth, high up between your top gum and upper lip. Leave it in place – the tablet will dissolve slowly over the following hour or so. It is best to take prochlorperazine buccal tablets after meals.
- If you forget to take a dose, take it as soon as you remember unless it is nearly time for your next dose, in which case leave out the missed dose. Do not take two doses together to make up for a missed dose.

Getting the most from your treatment

- Keep your regular doctor's appointments so your progress can be checked. If you are taking prochlorperazine for a long-term condition, you may need to have some blood tests from time to time.
- If you have been given prochlorperazine to relieve nausea, dizziness or agitation, it will be given to you for a short time until your symptoms have eased. If you have been prescribed prochlorperazine for schizophrenia, treatment is usually long-term. Keep taking prochlorperazine until your doctor tells you otherwise, as your doctor may want you to reduce your dose gradually if a change in your treatment becomes necessary.
- Prochlorperazine may cause your skin to become more sensitive to sunlight than normal. Use a sunscreen that protects against UVA light and has a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 15, especially in strong sunlight or until you know how your skin reacts. Do not use sunbeds.

- If you are having an operation or any dental treatment, tell the person carrying out the treatment which medicines you are taking. This is important because prochlorperazine may interfere with any anaesthetic you receive.
- If you buy or take any 'over-the-counter' medicines, check with a pharmacist that they are suitable to take with prochlorperazine. Antacid remedies should not be taken at the same time, as they reduce the amount of prochlorperazine absorbed by your body.
- If you drink alcohol, ask your doctor for advice about drinking while you are on prochlorperazine. Alcohol will increase the chance that you experience side-effects and is unlikely to be recommended for you.
- If you have diabetes, check your blood sugar (glucose) levels regularly, as prochlorperazine may affect the levels of sugar in your blood.

Can prochlorperazine cause problems?

Along with their useful effects, most medicines can cause unwanted side-effects although not everyone experiences them. The table below contains some of the most common ones associated with prochlorperazine. You will find a full list in the manufacturer's information leaflet supplied with your medicine. The unwanted effects often improve as your body adjusts to the new medicine, but speak with your doctor or pharmacist if any of the following continue or become troublesome.

Common prochlorperazine side-effects	What can I do if I experience this?
Feeling dizzy or sleepy, blurred vision, slowed reaction time	If this happens, do not drive and do not use tools or machines. Do not drink alcohol
Headache	Drink plenty of water and ask a pharmacist to recommend a suitable painkiller. If the headaches continue, let your doctor know
Dry mouth	Try chewing sugar-free gum or sucking sugar-free sweets
Feeling shaky or restless, unusual or uncontrollable muscle movements	Speak with your doctor as soon as possible about any of these. Your treatment may need adjusting
Changes to the way your body regulates temperature	Take care in hot or cold weather to make sure that you do not get too hot or too cold
Changes in weight, difficulty sleeping, mood changes, stuffy nose, changes in sexual function, breast enlargement, production of breast milk, menstrual problems, fast heartbeats, constipation, difficulty passing urine	Discuss these with your doctor if any become troublesome

Important: if you experience symptoms such as muscle stiffness, a very high temperature, confusion, a fast heartbeat and sweating, you must contact your doctor immediately. These may be signs of a rare but serious condition known as neuroleptic malignant syndrome.

If you experience any other symptoms which you think may be due to this medicine, speak with your doctor or pharmacist.

How to store prochlorperazine

- Keep all medicines out of the reach and sight of children.
- Store in a cool, dry place, away from direct heat and light.

Important information about all medicines

Never take more than the prescribed dose. If you suspect that you or someone else might have taken an overdose of this medicine, go to the accident and emergency department of your local hospital. Take the container with you, even if it is empty.

This medicine is for you. Never give it to other people even if their condition appears to be the same as yours.

Do not keep out-of-date or unwanted medicines. Take them to your local pharmacy which will dispose of them for you.

If you have any questions about this medicine ask your pharmacist.

If you experience side effects, you can report them online through the [Yellow Card website](#).

Further reading

- [Manufacturer's PIL, Buccastem® M](#); Alliance Pharmaceuticals, The electronic Medicines Compendium. Dated February 2020.
- [Manufacturer's PIL, Stemetil® Tablets 5 mg](#); Sanofi, The electronic Medicines Compendium. Dated January 2022.

- [Medicines Complete BNF 88th Edition](#); British Medical Association and Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain, London.

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