

Doxepin Therapeutic Cheat Sheet

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TRADE NAMES

Oral:

- > Silenor (U.S.)

Topical:

- > Prudoxin, Zonalon (U.S.)

MECHANISM OF ACTION

Tricyclic antidepressant with strong antihistamine (H1 & H2) activity

- > Far superior antihistamine potency compared to diphenhydramine and/or hydroxyzine

OFF-LABEL USES

- > Chronic pruritus (including end-stage renal disease, scalp, neurogenic, atopic dermatitis)
- > Urticaria
- > Neurotic excoriations
- > Serum sickness-like reaction pruritus

LABELED INDICATIONS

Oral:

- > Insomnia
- > Unipolar major depressive disorder

Topical:

- > Moderate pruritus (atopic dermatitis, lichen simplex chronicus)

DOSING

Oral:

- > Prolonged half-life
- > 10 to 25 mg per day (QHS recommended)
- > In elderly: initial dosing of < 5 mg with slow dose escalation
- > Intractable disease (without systemic adverse effects) may require as high as 300 mg per day

Topical:

- > 5% cream (45 g tube)

SIDE EFFECTS

Oral:

- > Sedation/drowsiness/somnolence
- > Impaired concentration
- > Orthostatic hypotension
- > Dizziness
- > Anticholinergic effects (dry mouth, dry eyes, increased thirst)
- > Reduced seizure threshold
- > Suicidality

Topical:

- > Allergic contact dermatitis
- > Burning/stinging sensation
- > Sedation/drowsiness

CONTRAINDICATIONS

- > Concurrent use with other antidepressants
- > History of mania or bipolar disorder
- > Severe cardiac disease
- > Seizure history

PREGNANCY & BREASTFEEDING

Oral:

- > Unclassified

Topical:

- > Category B

MONITORING

- > With higher doses, consider electrocardiograms for cardiac monitoring
- > Monitor for falls and traumatic injuries

FOLLOW UP

- > Consider plasma concentration testing for suspected treatment failure (accepted range 150-250 ug/L)
- > Treatment failure may correlate with polymorphisms in CYP450 (CYP2D6) enzymes