



# Reminyl (galantamine)

Generic name: Galantamine

Available strengths: 4 mg, 8 mg, 12 mg tablets

Available in generic: No

Drug class: Cognitive enhancer/cholinesterase inhibitor

## General Information

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**Reminyl (galantamine)** is a cognitive-enhancing medication for treating mild-to-moderate dementia of Alzheimer's disease. Deterioration of cognition and memory in Alzheimer's disease, and in other forms of dementia, may be associated with degeneration of **cholinergic neurons**. Reminyl inhibits the **cholinesterase enzyme** that breaks down **acetylcholine**, a neurotransmitter. This increases brain acetylcholine levels, optimizing the function of intact cholinergic neurons and improving memory and overall cognitive functioning.

## Dosing Information

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The starting dosage of Reminyl is 4 mg twice a day (8 mg/day). The patient should receive this dosage for a minimum of 4 weeks before any dosage adjustment. If tolerated, the dosage may be increased to 8 mg twice daily (16 mg/day). If needed, the dosage may be increased after 4 weeks to 12 mg twice a day (24 mg/day). Dosages higher than 24 mg/day are not recommended. If Reminyl is stopped and therapy interrupted for several days or longer, the patient should start treatment again at the lowest dosage, and the dosage should be increased slowly to the original dosage.

## Common Side Effects

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The most common side effects associated with Reminyl are dizziness, nausea, diarrhea, vomiting, fatigue, loss of appetite, and weight loss. These effects are more frequent at the higher dosages, but in most cases the side effects are generally mild and transient and usually resolve after 1–3 weeks with continued therapy.

## Adverse Reactions and Precautions

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Patients who are undergoing surgery should let their physician know that they are taking Reminyl, because it can interact with any muscle-relaxing type of anesthesia that they may receive.

Reminyl may have a slowing effect on heart rate. Patients who have a history of slow heart rate (bradycardia), who are taking medications for cardiac conduction problems, or who have a history of dizziness related to cardiac problems must be monitored closely while taking Reminyl.

Reminyl may have a potential to cause seizures in susceptible individuals, although this adverse reaction is very rare. However, seizure activity may also be a manifestation of Alzheimer's disease.

Patients with a history of asthma or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease should be monitored closely while taking Reminyl. Reminyl may worsen these pulmonary diseases.

Reminyl may increase gastric acid secretions. Patients who have a history of ulcers or who are taking non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medications, such as ibuprofen or naproxen, should be monitored closely for signs of gastrointestinal bleeding.

## Possible Drug Interactions

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Few significant drug interactions are associated with Reminyl. The clinically significant drug interactions reported with Reminyl are summarized in the table below.

Anticholinergic agents (e.g., Cogentin)	Anticholinergic agents and Reminyl, when used in combination, may oppose each other's action, reducing their effectiveness.
Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) (e.g., aspirin, ibuprofen, naproxen)	Because NSAIDs are associated with an increased risk of gastrointestinal ulcers and Reminyl may increase gastric acid secretions, the combination may enhance the risk of gastrointestinal bleeding.
Nizoral (ketoconazole) and Diflucan (fluconazole)	These antifungal agents may inhibit Reminyl's metabolism and increase its blood levels and pharmacological actions, potentially producing adverse effects.
Tagamet (cimetidine)	This agent can inhibit the metabolism of Reminyl, increasing its blood levels and enhancing its pharmacological actions and adverse effects.
Erythromycin	This agent can inhibit the metabolism of Reminyl, increasing its blood levels and enhancing its pharmacological actions and adverse effects.
Paxil (paroxetine)	This agent can inhibit the metabolism of Reminyl, increasing its blood levels and enhancing its pharmacological actions and adverse effects.

Patients taking Reminyl should not consume alcohol because the combination may increase sedation and drowsiness. Moreover, the sedative effects of alcohol may act as a depressant, obscuring the therapeutic effects of Reminyl and complicating treatment.

## Overdose

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Overdose with Reminyl may result in a **cholinergic crisis** resulting from high levels of acetylcholine. The symptoms of a cholinergic crisis include severe nausea, vomiting, salivation, slow heart rate, sweating, low blood pressure, muscle weakness, respiratory depression, and convulsions. Overdose with Reminyl can be life threatening.

Any suspected overdose should be treated as an emergency. The person should be taken to the emergency department for observation and treatment. The prescription bottle of medication (and any other medication suspected in the overdose) should be brought as well, because the information on the prescription label can be helpful to the treating physician in determining the number of pills ingested.

## Special Considerations

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- If you miss a dose, take it as soon as possible, but if it is close to the next scheduled dose, skip the missed dose and continue on your regular dosing schedule. Do not take double doses.
- Reminyl may be taken with or without food. However, it is best to take the medication in the morning and shortly before retiring at bedtime.
- Prolonged vomiting and diarrhea may result in dehydration and loss of electrolytes, and this can be dangerous, especially for seniors. Inform your physician when prolonged vomiting or diarrhea occurs for more than 1 day.
- Reminyl may cause dizziness and drowsiness, especially during initiation of therapy, and impair your alertness. Use caution when driving or performing tasks that require alertness.
- Store the medication in its originally labeled, light-resistant container, away from heat and moisture. Heat and moisture may precipitate breakdown of your medication.
- Keep your medication out of reach of children.

*If you have any questions about your medication, consult your physician or pharmacist.*

