

CLONIDINE

DRUG NAME

Generic: Clonidine

Class of drug: Alpha₂ and imidazoline agonist

Brands in Australia: Catapres (other generic brands available)

DOSAGE FORM

Available as a 100 microgram tablet or 150 microgram tablet. Quantity 100.

HOW IT WORKS

Originally for blood pressure, clonidine reduces sympathetic nerve activity (the “fight-or-flight” system), which can make pain worse. In some settings, it helps with nerve pain and withdrawal-related pain.

Used in pain management, especially for chronic or neuropathic pain, as directed by your doctor. Sometimes used in opioid withdrawal, ADHD, menopausal flushing, and high blood pressure. It is rarely used for migraines, spasticity, and diarrhoea.

Onset of action

- Pain relief and calming effect may be noticed within **a few days**.
- Full benefit may take **1–2 weeks**.

DOSAGE & FREQUENCY

Your doctor will advise on the starting dose and guide the dose changes.

- start with _____
- if tolerated, increase to _____ after _____ days
- if necessary, increase by _____ every _____ week(s)
- if successive increases are well tolerated *and bring additional benefit*, continue to titrate up to a maximum of _____
- to be reviewed by your doctor on _____

Dose is adjusted gradually depending on your response and blood pressure. Sedation and hypotension (low blood pressure) can occur. This must be monitored during adjustment.

ROUTE OF ADMINISTRATION

Oral (by mouth) unless otherwise specified.

WHAT ELSE SHOULD I KNOW WHILE TAKING THIS MEDICATION

- Take at the same times each day, with or without food.
- Monitor blood pressure regularly (do not take if the top number is less than 110 mmHg).
- This medicine may make you feel drowsy and may increase the effects of alcohol. If you are affected, do not drive or operate machinery.

- You may feel dizzy on standing when you first start taking this medicine or when the dose is increased. Get up gradually from sitting or lying to minimise this effect; sit or lie down if you become dizzy.
- Do not stop taking this medicine suddenly unless your doctor tells you to.

STORAGE INSTRUCTIONS

Store at room temperature, below 25°C, away from moisture and sunlight. Keep out of reach of children.

DISPOSAL INSTRUCTIONS

Return unused or expired medication to your pharmacy for safe disposal.

MISSED DOSE INSTRUCTIONS

Missing doses may cause your blood pressure to rise.
Ask your doctor or pharmacist.

EMERGENCY INSTRUCTIONS

Seek urgent medical help if you:

- Take too much (overdose may cause extreme drowsiness, very low blood pressure, slow heart rate, difficulty breathing).
- Feel faint, confused, or have chest pain.
- Develop a severe allergic reaction (swelling, rash, difficulty breathing).

COMMON SIDE EFFECTS

- Drowsiness, tiredness
- Dry mouth
- Dizziness, especially when standing
- Constipation
- Headache
- Transient itchiness

SERIOUS SIDE EFFECTS

Seek medical attention if:

- Very low blood pressure (below 90-100 mmHg) or fainting
- Slow heart rate, irregular heartbeat
- Severe mood changes, depression
- Sudden spike in blood pressure if stopped suddenly (rebound hypertension)

MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES FOR SIDE EFFECTS

- Drowsiness: Take at night; avoid driving until you know its effect.
- Dry mouth: Chew sugar-free gum, sip water.
- Constipation: Increase fluids and fibre.
- Dizziness: Stand up slowly; use support if needed.

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Interactions:

- Alcohol and sedatives increase drowsiness.
- Use caution with other blood pressure medicines (risk of very low blood pressure).
- May interact with some antidepressants.

Precautions:

- Not recommended in pregnancy or breastfeeding unless clearly needed.
- Caution in people with heart disease, kidney problems, or depression.
- Do not stop suddenly — risk of agitation and high blood pressure rebound- taper under medical supervision.

Elective surgery advice

- **Do not stop clonidine abruptly before surgery** — this may cause dangerous rebound high blood pressure.
- Inform your surgeon and anaesthetist that you are taking clonidine.
- You may be advised to continue it right up to the day of surgery.
- Always follow your specialist's advice about perioperative management.

TITRATION DIARY

Date	Dose Taken	Side Effects	Notes (e.g., sleep, pain relief)