

Commonly Prescribed Muscle Relaxants

Muscle Relaxant	Brand Name	Mechanism of Action	Typical Dosing	Side Effects	Cautions
Baclofen	Lioresal	Presynaptic GABA-B agonist	5–20 mg every 6 hrs	Sedation Confusion Dizziness Nausea	Abrupt discontinuation can cause seizure
Carisoprodol	Soma	CNS depression	250–350 mg every 6 hrs	Sedation Headache	Causes tolerance, withdrawal, and addiction Schedule IV controlled substance Not approved for under age 16
Cyclobenzaprine	Flexeril Amrix	Tricyclic agent (related to amitriptyline)	Immediate release: 5–10 mg every 8 hrs Extended release: 15 mg daily Extended release: 15 mg daily (max 30 mg/24 hrs)	Sedation Dizziness Blurred vision Dry mouth	Withdrawal syndrome (nausea, headache, general discomfort) May cause serotonin syndrome in combination with SSRIs, SNRIs, bupropion, tramadol, etc.
Metaxalone	Skelaxin	CNS depression	800 mg every 6–8 hrs	Sedation Nausea Irritability	Gastrointestinal absorption increased with food and older age
Methocarbamol	Robaxin	CNS depression	750 mg every 4 hrs, 1500 mg every 6 hrs (max 8000 mg/24 hrs)	Headache Dizziness Sedation	Sedating
Orphenadrine	Norflex Banflex Flexon	Central atropine-like anticholinergic effects (related to diphenhydramine)	100 mg every 12 hrs	Dry mouth Blurred vision Constipation Sedation	Euphorogenic properties
Tizanidine	Zanaflex	Central alpha-2 adrenergic agonist	2–16 mg every 6–8 hrs (max 36 mg/24 hrs)	Sedation Dizziness Hypotension Bradycardia Elevated transaminases	Withdrawal syndrome that includes elevated blood pressure and heart rate Hallucinations and psychosis in 3% of patients

From the Clinical Update:
“Muscle Relaxants: Sedatives Often Under the Radar!”
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