

Weight Gain

Up-arrow Weight-scale

Excessive or prolonged use of haloperidol affects hormonal levels and subsequently metabolic processes that affect glucose levels and lipid levels, ultimately leading to weight gain.

QT Prolongation

QT-heart Prolonged

Haloperidol may cause QT prolongation by blocking potassium channels, resulting in serious cardiac dysrhythmias. It is important to avoid administering Haloperidol with other QT-prolonging drugs, such as amiodarone or erythromycin, because it may potentiate cardiac dysrhythmias. To decrease the risk of dysrhythmias, the patient should have an ECG and potassium test completed before treatment.

Restlessness

Restless-wrestler

Akathisia is characterized by restlessness and manifests as constantly moving. Although the exact cause of akathisia remains unknown, it has been associated with medications such as Haloperidol (Haldol) that block dopaminergic transmission in the brain. Akathisia can be resolved by switching to a low-potency antipsychotic or using other medications (beta blockers, benzodiazepines, anticholinergics) to suppress symptoms.

Considerations

Caution in Seizure Patients

Caution-sign Caesar-patient

Haloperidol should be administered with caution because antipsychotics lower the seizure threshold and, therefore, increase the risk of seizures. Seizures may occur in susceptible individuals with seizure disorders or with excessive doses of haloperidol. During treatment, the patient should be monitored.

Neuroleptic Malignant Syndrome

Nerve-leopard and Malignant-man

Excessive amounts of haloperidol may cause neuroleptic malignant syndrome, a condition that affects multiple organ systems and ultimately leads to death. Symptoms of neuroleptic malignant syndrome include rigidity, sudden hyperthermia, and autonomic instability characterized by fluctuations in blood pressure and heart rhythms. Other symptoms include altering level of consciousness, seizures, and comas. It is important to cease the medication immediately and initiate supportive measures.