

What Is Cyproheptadine?

Cyproheptadine is an *antihistamine* that also alters serotonin in ways similar to the antidepressant mirtazapine (Remeron). Antihistamines were originally used for allergies. Cyproheptadine is sometimes used to treat anxiety, insomnia, nightmares, anorexia, alcohol use disorder, and sexual side effects from other medications. It may prevent cluster and migraine headaches. It comes in generic tablets and syrup.

How Can This Medicine Help?

When used for anxiety, it works best when used for a short time along with psychotherapy. Cyproheptadine can help with insomnia when used for a short time along with a behavioral program, such as regular soothing routines at bedtime and increased exercise in the daytime. In people who are not eating enough and are too thin, it can increase appetite and help to gain weight.

How Does This Medicine Work?

Cyproheptadine can help decrease anxiety and help falling asleep because of its sedative effect—that is, it makes people a little sleepy so that they feel less nervous and fall asleep more easily. It works on the *serotonin* system as well as the *cholinergic* and *histamine* systems.

Side Effects and Drug Interactions

Fatigue and weight gain are the most common side effects. Rarely, allergic reactions can happen on any medication. Stop this medication if you have hives, swelling, rash, trouble breathing within the first few weeks of starting it.

Do not take cyproheptadine at the same time as or even within a month of taking another type of medicine called a monoamine oxidase inhibitor (MAOI), such as selegiline (El-depryl), phenelzine (Nardil), tranylcypromine (Parnate), or isocarboxazid (Marplan).