

Triazolam (Halcion)

Triazolam (Halcion) is a rapid onset benzodiazepine that potentiates the inhibitory effects of GABA. This action causes CNS depression and is indicated for treatment of insomnia. Side effects include anterograde amnesia, paradoxical excitement, rebound insomnia, confusion, respiratory depression, and hypotension. Triazolam is contraindicated in pregnant women. Due to the risk of dependency, this medication is indicated for short term use.



PLAY PICMONIC

Mechanism

Rapid-Onset Benzodiazepine

Rapid-rabbit On-switch Benz-dice

Triazolam is a rapid-onset benzodiazepine that works by binding to the GABA receptor, thereby increasing the frequency of chloride channel opening. As chloride ions enter the channels spanning across the neuronal membrane, the neuron becomes highly negative and decreases its ability to fire electrical impulses. This action enhances the inhibitory effects of GABA and causes CNS depression.

Indications

Insomnia

Taped-awake-insomniac

Triazolam helps treat insomnia by promoting sleep affecting through the cortical areas of the brain. Due to its rapid onset and short half-life, the medication is often used for short-term treatment of acute insomnia, such as jet lag. Although the drug is used to help patients fall asleep, triazolam is not indicated to help maintain sleep.

Side Effects

Rebound Insomnia

Rebounding Taped-awake-insomniac

Triazolam may cause rebound insomnia after abrupt discontinuation. Symptoms of insomnia are considered worse than before drug treatment. These symptoms are more profound in triazolam compared with other benzodiazepines.

Respiratory Depression

Deflated Lungs

Since triazolam causes CNS depression, avoid using other CNS depressants, such as opioids, barbiturates, and alcohol while taking the medication. The concurrent use of triazolam with other CNS depressants may cause respiratory depression.

Hypotension

Hippo-BP

Although oral administration of triazolam has minimal cardiovascular effects, the medication given intravenously may cause hypotension. The medication has muscle relaxant properties that affect the heart and blood vessels.

Paradoxical Excitement

Parrot-ox Excited

Paradoxical excitement is a common side effect of benzodiazepines and is characterized by increased talkativeness, excessive movement, emotional release, and excitement.

Amnesia

Memory-eraser

By acting on the hippocampus and cerebral cortex, triazolam causes anterograde amnesia. The patient may forget events after taking the medication. Evaluate the possibility of anterograde amnesia if the patient complains of forgetfulness.

Confusion

Confucius

By affecting the hippocampus and cerebral cortex centers of the brain, triazolam causes CNS depression such as confusion. The CNS effects are dose-dependent and excessive dosage may cause stupor. To minimize withdrawal symptoms, slowly taper the medication.

Contraindications

Pregnancy

Caution-tape at Pregnant-woman

Since benzodiazepines are lipid-soluble and cross the placental barrier, triazolam is contraindicated in pregnancy. The medication may cause congenital malformations in the fetus and CNS depression near term. If the patient is female and of childbearing age, warn the patient about the risk of fetal harm when using this Category X teratogenic medication. Instruct the patient to discontinue use of triazolam if pregnancy occurs.

Considerations

Short-Term Administration

Nurse-in-Shorts Administering

Tolerance to hypnotic effects can develop quickly in patients taking triazolam, in as little as 11 to 18 days, which is much faster than other benzodiazepines.