

GRAVOL® is a trade name for the nonprescription drug dimenhydrinate. Gravol and similar medications are used to prevent and treat nausea and vomiting.

Some people abuse these drugs because large doses can produce a “high” and hallucinations. They are inexpensive and easy to obtain.

To prevent the abuse of these drugs, Alberta pharmacists keep them behind the counter.

Short-term effects

- At recommended doses, Gravol can cause drowsiness, dizziness and blurred vision. It can impair your concentration and motor coordination. For these reasons, you should use Gravol with caution if driving or doing other things that require you to be fully alert. It can be especially dangerous to combine it with alcohol and other depressant drugs.
- Dry mouth, excitation and nervousness (especially in children) are other side effects.
- Abusers often take 5 to 25 tablets. At the lower doses, you can experience feelings of well-being and euphoria. At the higher doses you can hallucinate. Taking Gravol with alcohol, codeine and other depressant drugs intensifies these effects.
- Large doses can also cause sluggishness, paranoia, agitation, memory loss, increased blood pressure and heart rate, and difficulty swallowing and speaking.
- Overdosing can result in confusion, irrational behaviour, muscle uncoordination, high fever and convulsions. Serious heart and breathing problems and coma can follow.
- Children experience these symptoms at lower doses than adults, and are especially prone to convulsions. Prompt medical attention is needed to treat overdoses.
- Overdoses ranging from 25 to 250 mg per kilogram of body weight can be fatal in adults.

Long-term effects

Chronic heavy users report problems with depression, confusion, loss of energy, vomiting, urine retention, and difficulty thinking and socializing.

Gravol and addiction

Chronic use of dimenhydrinate can result in tolerance, dependence and withdrawal.

If you use this drug for more than a few days, you can develop tolerance to it. You will need to take larger doses to feel the same effects.

When dependent users stop taking Gravol, they experience withdrawal symptoms such as excitability, weakness and discomfort, poor appetite, stomach cramps and nausea.