

# Phentermine and Topiramate Combination

## What is it used for?

Phentermine and topiramate can either be given as separate medications or as a combination product in which the two medications are put together in one tablet.

Phentermine is used to decrease appetite in patients who carry extra weight AND who are enrolled in a weight loss program that includes dietary, physical activity, and behavioral changes.

Topiramate helps patients feel full more quickly and feel less hungry. It may also help patients binge eat (eating a large amount of food in a short period of time less often). Topiramate may help you stick to a healthy diet, though used alone, it will not cause weight loss.

## How does it work?

Phentermine is in a class of medications called anorectics. It works by decreasing appetite. Patients on phentermine find that they:

- feel less hunger
- find it easier to push the plate away
- have an easier time eating less

Topiramate is a medication that was originally developed to treat seizures in children and migraine headaches in children and adults. It affects chemical messengers in the brain, but the exact way it works to decrease weight is unknown.

Topiramate may help you:

- feel less interest in eating in between meals
- think less about food and eating
- find it easier to push the plate away
- find giving up pop easier
- have an easier time eating less

For some of our patients, these feelings are very real and immediate. For other patients, the feelings are less obvious. They don't feel much of a change but find they have lost weight. Like all weight loss medications, phentermine/topiramate works best when you help it work. This means:

- having less tempting high calorie (fattening) food around the house
- staying away from situations or people that may trigger your cravings
- eating out (take out, fast food or eating in a restaurant) only one time or less each week.
- eating your meals at a table with the TV or computer off

## How should I take this medication?

- The recommended starting dosage for the phentermine/topiramate combination product is 3.75 mg/23 mg (phentermine 3.75 mg/topiramate 23 mg) by mouth once a day for 14 days; after 14

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days increase to 7.5 mg/46 mg (phentermine 7.5 mg/topiramate 46 mg) by mouth once a day. You will remain on this dose until you see your doctor next.

- Depending on how well the treatment is working, your doctor may increase the dose further. The phentermine/topiramate combination product also comes in dose of 11.25 mg/69 mg (phentermine 11.25 mg/topiramate 69 mg) orally once daily and 15 mg/92 mg (phentermine 15 mg/topiramate 92 mg) by mouth once a day. Your doctor will tell you if they are going to change your prescription to one of these higher doses.

### **Is phentermine/topiramate combination safe?**

Phentermine/topiramate is FDA approved for use in children or adolescents 12 years of age and older with obesity. You should not take phentermine if you have high blood pressure, heart disease, hyperthyroidism (overactive thyroid gland), glaucoma, or if you are taking stimulant ADHD medications.

Most people tolerate topiramate with no problems. Please tell your doctor if you have a history of kidney stones, if you are taking phenytoin or birth control pills, or if you are pregnant. Topiramate is harmful in pregnancy. Topiramate can decrease your ability to tolerate hot weather. You should be sure to drink plenty of water to prevent dehydration and kidney stones.

### **What are the side effects?**

Call your doctor right away if you have any of these side effects:

- increased blood pressure or heart palpitations
- severe restlessness or dizziness
- difficulty doing exercises that you have been previously able to do
- chest pain or shortness of breath
- swelling of the legs and ankles
- change in mood, especially thoughts of suicide
- rash or pain in your flanks (side and back) or groin

If you notice less serious side effects, talk with your doctor:

- numbness or tingling in hands and feet
- nausea
- mental fogginess, trouble concentrating, memory problems
- diarrhea
- dry mouth or unpleasant taste
- diarrhea or constipation
- trouble sleeping

One of the dangers of topiramate is the possibility of birth defects. If you get pregnant when you are taking topiramate, there is the risk that your baby will be born with a cleft lip or palate. If you are on topiramate and of childbearing age, you need to be on a reliable form of birth control (examples include intrauterine devices, injections, or condoms) or refrain from sexual intercourse.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Topiramate may decrease the effectiveness of birth control pills and increase your chance of getting pregnant.