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Astelin

Astelin is a prescription nasal spray containing the antihistamine azelastine hydrochloride. It is used to treat symptoms of seasonal and year-round allergic rhinitis, such as sneezing, runny nose, and nasal itching.

- **Active Ingredient:** Azelastine hydrochloride
- **Dosage Form:** Nasal spray
- **Dosage:** 0.1% or 0.15% solution
- **Indications:** Symptomatic treatment of seasonal allergic rhinitis and perennial allergic rhinitis
- **Manufacturer:** Meda Pharmaceuticals
- **Storage:** Best stored upright at controlled room temperature (typically 20-25°C or 68-77°F); avoid freezing. Keep the cap on when not in use.
- **Market Price:**
- **Drug Status:** Prescription Only

Description

What is Astelin (Azelastine)? Astelin is the brand name for a prescription nasal spray containing the active ingredient azelastine hydrochloride. It is classified as an antihistamine, a type of medication that blocks the effects of histamine, a substance your body releases during an allergic reaction. For a broader understanding of this medication class, see our guide to antihistamines and allergy season. Unlike oral allergy medications that work throughout the body, Astelin nasal spray delivers the medication directly to the nasal passages where allergy symptoms often originate. This can provide faster, more targeted relief from nasal symptoms. It is available as a generic under the name azelastine hydrochloride. Key Characteristics Astelin is distinctive among nasal allergy sprays for two reasons. First, it can begin to relieve symptoms within 15-30 minutes of use. Second, as an antihistamine, it may cause drowsiness in some individuals, unlike steroid nasal sprays. A common, transient side effect is a bitter taste in the mouth, which can often be minimized with proper administration technique.

General Instructions

How to Use Astelin Nasal Spray Correct administration is crucial for effectiveness and to minimize the common side effect of a bitter taste. Priming and Preparation Before first use or if the spray has not been used for 3 or more days, the pump must be primed. Remove the safety clip and dust cap. Hold the bottle upright and pump the spray unit several times until a fine mist appears. The pump is now ready. To avoid contamination, do not spray the medication toward anyone and never insert the tip into your nose. Proper Administration Technique Gently blow your nose to clear your nostrils. Shake the bottle gently before each use. Close one nostril by pressing a finger against the side of your nose. Tilt your head slightly forward. Keeping the bottle upright, insert the tip into the other nostril. While breathing in gently through your nose, press down firmly and quickly on the pump to release one spray. Breathe out through your mouth. Avoid tilting your head back, as this can cause the medication to run down your throat and cause a bitter taste. Repeat steps for the other nostril if directed by your doctor. For more on correctly using medication instructions, see this guide to understanding medication information. Duration of Use Use Astelin exactly as prescribed by your doctor, typically twice daily. Do not use it more frequently. It is for controlling allergy

symptoms, not for immediate relief of an asthma attack. For more on managing related conditions, see information on asthma medications.

Side Effects

Side Effects of Astelin Common and Serious Side Effects of Astelin (Azelastine) Nasal Spray Frequency Side Effects Action to Take Common Bitter taste in the mouth (most common) Headache Nasal burning or irritation Drowsiness or fatigue Sneezing immediately after use These are often mild. The bitter taste can be reduced by proper administration (not tilting head back). Drowsiness may lessen with continued use. Use caution when driving or operating machinery. Serious (Contact Doctor) Severe or worsening nasal irritation, sores, or bleeding Signs of an allergic reaction: rash, hives, itching, swelling of the face/tongue/throat, severe dizziness, trouble breathing Extreme drowsiness or confusion Worsening of asthma symptoms Stop using Astelin and seek medical advice. For allergic reactions, seek emergency help. Note on Drowsiness While applied locally, a portion of azelastine can be absorbed into the bloodstream. Therefore, Astelin can cause central nervous system effects like drowsiness in some patients, similar to older oral antihistamines. The risk is higher if combined with alcohol or other sedating substances.

Uses

What is Astelin Used For? Astelin (azelastine) nasal spray is approved by the FDA for the treatment of symptoms associated with allergic rhinitis. Primary Medical Uses Seasonal Allergic Rhinitis (Hay Fever): Treatment of symptoms such as sneezing, itchy or runny nose, and nasal congestion in adults and children 5 years and older. Vasomotor Rhinitis: Treatment of nasal symptoms such as congestion, post-nasal drip, and runny nose in adults and children 12 years and older where an allergic cause is not identified. Mechanism of Action Azelastine is an H1-receptor antagonist (antihistamine). It works by blocking the action of histamine at receptor sites in the nasal tissues. Histamine is a key chemical released during an allergic reaction that causes itching, swelling, and mucus production. By blocking it locally, Astelin helps relieve these symptoms. It is important to note that Astelin is a treatment for symptom relief and does not cure the underlying allergy. For nasal congestion, it may be combined with other medications like decongestants, but this should only be done under a doctor's guidance to avoid interactions. For context on multi-symptom relief, see our guide to cold and flu medicines.

Safety advice

Interactions Alcohol:

- Use with caution
- Alcohol can increase the nervous system side effects of azelastine, such as dizziness, drowsiness, and difficulty concentrating. It is advisable to avoid or limit alcohol consumption while using this medication.

Interactions Other Medications:

- Consult your doctor
- Inform your doctor about all medications you use. Astelin may interact with other drugs that cause drowsiness, including: opioid pain relievers, sleep aids, muscle relaxants, anti-anxiety medications, other antihistamines (e.g., diphenhydramine), and certain antidepressants. Combining these can dangerously increase sedation.

Special Groups Pregnancy:

- Consult your doctor

- The safety of azelastine nasal spray during pregnancy has not been definitively established. It should be used only if the potential benefit justifies the potential risk to the fetus. For general guidance, refer to our resource on [medication safety in pregnancy](#).

Special Groups Breastfeeding:

- Use with caution
- It is unknown if azelastine is excreted in human milk. Because many drugs are excreted in milk and because of the potential for serious adverse reactions in nursing infants, a decision should be made to discontinue nursing or discontinue the drug, considering the importance of the drug to the mother.

Special Groups Elderly:

- Use with caution
- Elderly patients may be more sensitive to the sedative effects of azelastine. Dose selection for an elderly patient should be cautious, starting at the low end of the dosing range.

Special Groups Children:

- Safe if prescribed
- The safety and effectiveness of Astelin for seasonal allergic rhinitis have been established for children 5 years of age and older. Use in younger children is not recommended.

Effects on Activities Driving:

- Use with caution
- Astelin may cause drowsiness and impair thinking and motor skills. Patients should not engage in activities requiring mental alertness, such as driving or operating machinery, until they know how the medication affects them. Learn more about [medicines and driving safety](#).

Effects on Activities Operating Machinery:

- Use with caution
- As with driving, caution is advised when operating hazardous machinery due to the potential for drowsiness or dizziness.

Concerns

Important Safety Concerns and Considerations Risk of Sedation Although administered nasally, systemic absorption of azelastine can occur, leading to central nervous system effects. Patients should be aware of the potential for drowsiness and avoid concurrent use of alcohol or other central nervous system depressants.

Local Nasal Effects Some patients may experience transient local irritation of the nasal mucous membranes, including burning, stinging, dryness, or epistaxis (nosebleed). These effects are usually mild. If severe irritation, ulceration, or bleeding occurs, discontinue use and consult a healthcare provider.

Worsening of Underlying Conditions Patients with narrow-angle glaucoma or urinary retention should use azelastine nasal spray with caution, as anticholinergic effects (though less common with topical use) are possible. Proper Administration to Avoid Taste Disturbance The most frequently reported adverse event is bitter taste. This is often a result of improper administration technique where the spray drips from the nasal cavity into the throat. Careful adherence to the administration instructions (keeping head tilted slightly forward, not sniffing forcefully) can significantly reduce this effect.

Warnings

Critical Warnings for Astelin Use Immediate Hypersensitivity Reactions Although rare, immediate hypersensitivity reactions may occur after administration of azelastine hydrochloride nasal spray. Signs include rash, pruritus (itching), swelling of the face/tongue/lips, and difficulty breathing. If such a reaction occurs, discontinue use immediately and initiate appropriate therapy. Effect on Wound Healing The safety

and effectiveness of Astelin in patients with nasal septum ulcers, nasal surgery, or nasal trauma have not been established. Use in these patients is not recommended until healing has occurred. Risk of Accidental Exposure to Eyes The spray should be administered intranasally only. Accidental exposure to the eyes may cause transient eye irritation or redness. If this occurs, rinse eyes thoroughly with water. Storage and Stability Store Astelin nasal spray at room temperature (between 15°C and 30°C or 59°F and 86°F). Do not freeze. The bottle should be discarded after the number of sprays on the label have been used, even if it is not completely empty, as the amount of azelastine per spray may no longer be consistent.

Dosage

Astelin Dosage Information Dosage is based on the condition being treated, patient's age, and response to therapy. The following are general guidelines; always use as directed by your doctor. Astelin (Azelastine HCl) Nasal Spray Dosage Guidelines Patient Group & Condition Recommended Dosage Notes Adults and Adolescents (12+ years) Seasonal Allergic Rhinitis 1 or 2 sprays per nostril, twice daily. Total daily dose: 4 to 8 sprays (0.548 mg to 1.096 mg azelastine). Adults and Adolescents (12+ years) Vasomotor Rhinitis 2 sprays per nostril, twice daily. Total daily dose: 8 sprays (1.096 mg azelastine). Children (5 to 11 years) Seasonal Allergic Rhinitis 1 spray per nostril, twice daily. Total daily dose: 4 sprays (0.548 mg azelastine). Not for vasomotor rhinitis in this age group. Administration Notes Priming: Prime the pump before first use (see General Instructions). Consistency: For best results, use regularly at the same times each day. Maximum Dose: Do not exceed the prescribed number of sprays per day. Onset of Action: Symptom relief may begin within 15-30 minutes. Missed Dose: If you miss a dose, use it as soon as you remember. If it is almost time for the next dose, skip the missed dose and resume your usual dosing schedule. Do not double the dose to catch up.

Interactions

Drug Interactions with Astelin While significant pharmacokinetic drug interactions with intranasal azelastine are not commonly reported, additive pharmacodynamic effects are a primary concern. Potential Drug Interactions with Astelin (Azelastine) Interacting Substance Class Examples Potential Effect Central Nervous System (CNS) Depressants Alcohol, barbiturates, benzodiazepines (e.g., alprazolam, diazepam), opioid analgesics (e.g., codeine, hydrocodone), sedating antihistamines, certain muscle relaxants. Additive sedation, drowsiness, dizziness, and impaired mental/motor performance. Extreme caution is advised. Other Anticholinergic Drugs Some antidepressants (tricyclics), medications for overactive bladder (e.g., oxybutynin), Parkinson's disease medications. Potential for additive anticholinergic effects (dry mouth, blurred vision, urinary retention, constipation). Drugs Prolonging QT Interval (Theoretical) Certain antibiotics, antiarrhythmics, antipsychotics. Azelastine has a very low risk of affecting cardiac rhythm at recommended intranasal doses. Caution is theoretical but should be noted, especially with high systemic exposure. Important: This is not a complete list. Always provide your doctor and pharmacist with a full list of all prescription, over-the-counter, and herbal products you are using.

FAQs

- **Why does Astelin leave a bitter taste in my mouth?**

This is the most common side effect. The bitter taste occurs when the medication drips from your nasal cavity down into the back of your throat. To minimize this, ensure you are using the correct technique: **do not tilt your head back** during or after spraying. Keep your head tilted slightly forward and avoid sniffing hard immediately after spraying.

- **Can Astelin make me sleepy even though it's a nasal spray?**

Yes. Although it is applied locally, a small amount of the medication can be absorbed into your

bloodstream. Azelastine is an antihistamine, and like some older oral antihistamines, it can cause drowsiness in a subset of users. The risk is higher if you are also taking other sedating medications or consume alcohol.

- **How is Astelin different from other allergy nasal sprays like fluticasone (Flonase)?**

Astelin (azelastine) is an antihistamine that works quickly (within 15-30 mins) to block histamine. Fluticasone is a corticosteroid that reduces inflammation and is most effective with regular daily use, often taking several days to reach full effect. They work via different mechanisms and are sometimes prescribed together for comprehensive allergy control.

- **Is generic azelastine as effective as brand-name Astelin?**

Yes. Generic azelastine hydrochloride nasal spray contains the same active ingredient in the same strength and formulation as the brand-name product. Generic medications must demonstrate bioequivalence to the brand-name drug, meaning they work in the same way and to the same extent. Choosing a generic can offer significant cost savings. Learn more about the [safety and efficacy of generic medicines](#).

- **How long can I safely use Astelin?**

Astelin is intended for daily use to manage chronic allergy symptoms. It is safe for long-term use when used as directed by a healthcare professional. If your symptoms do not improve or worsen after several days of consistent use, consult your doctor.

Other Details

Additional Information Storage and Disposal Store at room temperature away from light and moisture. Do not store in the bathroom. Keep the bottle tightly closed when not in use. Keep all medications away from children and pets. Do not flush medications down the toilet or pour them into a drain unless instructed to do so. Discard the bottle safely after you have used the number of sprays indicated on the label, even if liquid remains. Cost and Generic Availability Astelin is the brand-name version of azelastine hydrochloride nasal spray. Generic versions are widely available and are typically less expensive. Both require a prescription. Reporting Side Effects You are encouraged to report negative side effects of prescription drugs to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) at 1-800-FDA-1088 or online at www.fda.gov/medwatch. Reporting helps the FDA monitor drug safety.

References

References and Medical Sources U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Astelin (azelastine hydrochloride) Nasal Spray Prescribing Information. [Updated 2012]. https://www.accessdata.fda.gov/drugsatfda_docs/label/2012/020114s023lbl.pdf MedlinePlus. Azelastine Nasal Spray. U.S. National Library of Medicine; [Updated 2020]. <https://medlineplus.gov/druginfo/meds/a608026.html> Drugs.com. Azelastine Nasal Professional Monograph. Drugs.com; [Updated 2024]. <https://www.drugs.com/mtm/azelastine-nasal.html> American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology (AAAAI). Overview of Allergic Rhinitis. <https://www.aaaai.org/tools-for-the-public/allergy,-asthma-immunology-glossary/allergic-rhinitis-defined>

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