

Understanding Allergy Treatments and Drowsiness

One of the most bothersome and potentially dangerous effects of allergies is that they can make people feel like they're in a fog (known as an allergy fog). Unfortunately, some allergy treatments may cause drowsiness, which can also make people feel foggy (known as a medicine fog). This potential side effect can make it difficult to stay focused at work, school, or home. It can also put people at risk for accident or injury, especially when driving a car or operating potentially dangerous machinery.

As people seek treatment for their allergies, it's important to understand issues of drowsiness that are associated with certain allergy medications. Here's a look back at how allergy medications have evolved:

Allergy medications called antihistamines were first introduced in the 1940s. They were effective at treating allergy symptoms but could cause drowsiness. Now known as *sedating antihistamines*, they can also cause excitability, especially in children. These medicines are typically available over-the-counter in 4-6 hour doses, so allergy sufferers may need to take up to six doses a day. One example of a sedating antihistamine is Benadryl®.¹

In the 1980s, a second generation of antihistamines emerged that provides significant relief of allergy symptoms with a longer duration of 12-24 hours. Some of these medications also have an improved side effect profile of being *non-drowsy*. Understanding the differences between these newer medicines can help consumers make an informed decision about their allergy treatments.

Although all of these newer antihistamines offer an improvement over earlier treatments in terms of dosing frequency (12 or 24 hours), some of them may still make people feel drowsy. The labeling of these medications contains precautions about the occurrence of drowsiness and fatigue and the need to be careful engaging in activities that require mental alertness, such as driving a car or operating potentially dangerous machinery. Cetirizine, the active ingredient in Zyrtec®², is an example of an antihistamine with such potential side effects.

¹ Benadryl® is a registered trademark of Johnson & Johnson.

² Zyrtec® is a registered trademark of UCB Pharma, S.A.

There are second generation antihistamines that treat allergies without causing drowsiness or fatigue. CLARITIN[®], which is proven to be non-drowsy, is an example of an antihistamine without those side effects.

Fight Allergies without Drowsiness

CLARITIN[®] provides powerful, 24-hour allergy relief that is proven to help allergy sufferers stay alert and focused. In fact, the *Cognition and Allergy: CLEAR Study* showed that treating allergies with CLARITIN[®] enables allergy sufferers to be as alert and focused as someone without allergies, so they could focus on the task at hand and enjoy their day.³

For kids who suffer from allergies, only CHILDREN'S CLARITIN[®] provides powerful relief that won't make kids feel drowsy or jittery. One dose lasts the entire day, so children can focus on their school work and not their allergies.

³ J.A.. Wilken, R.L. Kane, C.L. Sullivan, R. Nowak. Cognition and allergy: CLEAR study results. *Annals of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology*. 2006;96:190.