

DrugFAQs

Lortab/Vicodin

Generic name: Hydrocodone bitartrate, Acetaminophen

Brand names: Norco, Zydone, Maxidone, Lortab, Lorcet, Hydrocet, Co-Gesic, Anexsia, Vicodin

Why is Lortab/Vicodin prescribed?

Vicodin combines a narcotic analgesic (painkiller) and cough reliever with a non-narcotic analgesic for the relief of moderate to moderately severe pain.

Most important fact about Lortab

Vicodin can be habit-forming. If you take Lortab over a long period of time, you can become mentally and physically dependent on it, and you may find the drug no longer works for you at the prescribed dosage.

How should you take Lortab?

Take Vicodin exactly as prescribed. Do not increase the amount you take or the frequency without your doctor's approval. Do not take Lortab for any reason other than the one prescribed. Do not give Lortab to others who may have similar symptoms.

--*If you miss a dose...*If you take Vicodin regularly, take the forgotten dose as soon as you remember. If it is almost time for your next dose, skip the one you missed and go back to your regular schedule. Do not take 2 doses at once.

--*Storage instructions...*Store at room temperature in a tightly closed container, away from light.

What side effects may occur?

Side effects cannot be anticipated. If any develop or change in intensity, inform your doctor as soon as possible. Only your doctor can determine if it is safe for you to continue taking Vicodin.

- *More common side effects may include:*

Dizziness, light-headedness, nausea, sedation, vomiting

If these side effects occur, it may help if you lie down after taking the medication.

Why should Lortab not be prescribed?

If you are sensitive to or have ever had an allergic reaction to hydrocodone, similar narcotic painkillers, or acetaminophen (Tylenol), you should not take Lortab. Make sure your doctor is aware of any drug reactions you have experienced.

Special warnings about Lortab

Vicodin may make you drowsy, less alert, or unable to function well physically. Do not drive a car, operate machinery, or perform any other potentially dangerous activities until you know how Lortab affects you. Use caution in taking Vicodin if you have a head injury. Narcotics tend to increase the pressure of the fluid within the skull, and this effect may be exaggerated by head injuries. Side effects of narcotics can interfere in the treatment of people with head injuries. Use Vicodin with caution if you have a severe liver or kidney disorder, an underactive thyroid gland, Addison's disease (a disease of the adrenal glands), an enlarged prostate, or urethral stricture (narrowing of the tube carrying urine from the bladder). Older adults and those in a weakened condition should be careful using Lortab, since it contains a narcotic. Narcotics such as Vicodin may interfere with the diagnosis and treatment of people with abdominal conditions. Hydrocodone suppresses the cough reflex; therefore, be careful using Vicodin after an operation or if you have a lung disease. High doses of hydrocodone may produce slowed breathing; if you are sensitive to Lortab, you are more likely to experience this effect.

Possible food and drug interactions when taking Lortab

Hydrocodone slows the nervous system. Alcohol can intensify this effect. If hydrocodone is taken with certain other drugs, the effects of either may be increased, decreased, or altered. It is especially important to check with your doctor before combining Vicodin with the following:

Antianxiety drugs such as Valium and Librium

Antidepressant medications classified as "tricyclics," such as Elavil and Tofranil

Antihistamines such as Tavist

Drugs classified as MAO inhibitors, including the antidepressants Nardil and Parnate

Major tranquilizers such as Thorazine and Haldol

Other narcotic analgesics such as Demerol

Other central nervous system depressants such as Halcion and Restoril

Special information if you are pregnant or breastfeeding

The effects of Vicodin in pregnancy have not been adequately studied. Do not take Lortab if you are pregnant or plan to become pregnant unless you are directed to do so by your doctor. Drug dependence occurs in newborns when the mother has taken Lortab regularly prior to delivery. If you take it shortly before delivery, the baby's breathing may be slowed. Acetaminophen does, and hydrocodone may, appear in breast milk and could affect a nursing infant. If Lortab is essential to your health, your doctor may advise you to discontinue breastfeeding your baby until your treatment is finished.

Recommended dosage

ADULTS

Your doctor will adjust the dosage according to the severity of the pain and the way the medication affects you. The dosages given below are for Vicodin products only. If your doctor prescribes other brands, your daily dose may vary. All forms of Vicodin are taken every 4 to 6 hours as needed for pain. The usual dose of Vicodin is 1 or 2 tablets, up to a maximum of 8 tablets per day. The usual dose of Vicodin HP is 1 tablet, up to a maximum of 6 tablets per day. For Vicodin ES, the usual dose is 1 tablet, up to a maximum of 5 tablets per day.

CHILDREN

The safety and effectiveness of Vicodin have not been established in children.

Overdosage

Any medication taken in excess can have serious consequences. A severe overdose of Vicodin can be fatal. If you suspect an overdose, seek emergency medical treatment immediately.

- *Symptoms of a Vicodin overdose include:*

Blood disorders, bluish tinge to skin, cold and clammy skin, extreme sleepiness progressing to a state of unresponsiveness or coma, general feeling of bodily discomfort, hearing impairment, heart problems, heavy perspiration, kidney problems, limp muscles, liver failure, low blood pressure, nausea, slow heartbeat, troubled or slowed breathing, vomiting