

# Perampanel (FYCOMPA®): the basics

## What is perampanel used for?

Perampanel has been approved by Health Canada for use in combination with other anti-seizure (anti-epileptic) medications to manage:

- **focal (partial) onset seizures** in people aged 7 years and older who are not adequately controlled with conventional therapy.
- **primary generalized tonic-clonic seizures** in people aged 12 years and older with epilepsy who are not adequately controlled with conventional therapy.

Your physician may decide to prescribe this medication for a use different from that approved by Health Canada.

If you have questions about whether this medication is appropriate for you, consult with your physician.

## What forms does this medication come in? Is there a generic drug version?

In Canada, perampanel is sold under the brand name Fycompa® and also as a generic drug.

Dosage form	Strengths available in Canada	Is it covered by the Ontario Drug Benefit (ODB) program?*
Tablets, oral	2 mg, 4 mg, 6 mg, 8 mg, 10 mg, and 12 mg	Perampanel is covered by ODB only when specific clinical criteria have been met. Consult your healthcare professional for more information.

\*Contact your pharmacist for the most up-to-date information regarding drug availability and coverage.

## Before starting perampanel, inform your healthcare professional of the following:

- your medical history, especially of allergies; mental health, kidney, or liver problems; or a history of alcohol dependency or substance use
- if you are pregnant, breastfeeding, or considering pregnancy
- any anti-seizure medications you have used in the past
- your current medications (prescription and nonprescription) and any substances you are taking

## Perampanel may interact with the following:

- **alcohol.** Drinking alcohol while on perampanel is not recommended, because it may worsen the mental health adverse reactions of this medication.
- **other anti-seizure medications**, such as carbamazepine, oxcarbazepine and phenytoin. Your physician may need to adjust the doses of your anti-seizure medications.
- **medications and substances that slow down the nervous system (CNS depressants)**, including alcohol and other anti-seizure medications. These may increase the risk of side effects, such as drowsiness or slowed breathing.
- **hormonal contraceptives** (such as oral contraceptives). These may be less effective when used with perampanel; consult with your healthcare professional to select the appropriate birth control methods.
- **many other medications.** This is not a comprehensive list of drug interactions. Inform your healthcare professional about all the medicines (prescription and nonprescription) or substances you are taking, including medications from other prescribers, over-the-counter medications, vitamins, minerals, herbal products, or alternative medicines, so they can check for potential drug interactions. A potential drug interaction may not rule out use of the medications together; dosage adjustments and/or additional monitoring (such as lab work) may be carried out by your healthcare professional; check with your physician or pharmacist.

## What are possible side effects from using perampanel?

Depending on the individual, side effects may occur at varying degrees or not at all, including:

- **serious mood or behaviour changes**, such as aggression, anger, and thoughts of hurting/attempts to hurt other people. These symptoms can occur in individuals with or without a history of mental health conditions or aggressive behaviour. They may occur while taking or after stopping perampanel, and are more likely when first starting this medication, when increasing the dose, and at higher doses. If you or your caregiver/family notice these symptoms or other unusual changes in behaviour or mood, contact your physician immediately.
- **dizziness, drowsiness, falls, and other side effects that can affect your cognition, alertness, coordination, or vision.** It is important to avoid activities requiring mental alertness or physical coordination (such as operating hazardous machines or driving) until you are sure that perampanel does not affect your abilities.
- **weight gain.** If you notice significant weight gain, tell your healthcare professional.
- **thoughts or actions of self-harm.** If you have thoughts of suicide or harming yourself, seek medical help.
- **rare but serious, life-threatening allergic reactions** that require immediate medical help. These reactions mostly occur during the first few weeks of therapy.

This is not a comprehensive list of possible side effects. Consult with your physician or pharmacist for more information about side effects, including what symptoms to monitor for and what to do about them.

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## Tips for using perampanel (Fycompa®):

- Take your medication as directed by your physician. Read the medication information sheets given to you by your healthcare professional. If you have any questions, ask your physician or pharmacist.
- This medication works best when taken at evenly-spaced intervals, at about the same time each day at bedtime.
- If your seizures worsen or you experience new types of seizures, contact your physician.

## How will my dose be determined?

In general, your physician will start you on a low dose to decrease the risk of side effects. This dose will be adjusted slowly based on seizure control and any side effects experienced. Other factors such as medical history and potential drug interactions will also be taken into consideration when determining your dose.

The usual maintenance dosage range of perampanel is given below; however, your physician may prescribe a higher or lower dose for you based on the reasons noted above.

Usual maintenance dosage range*	
Adults	4 to 8 mg once daily at bedtime
Children	Consult your child's physician or pharmacist.**

\*Your dosage will be individualized based on factors such as indication, medical history, potential drug interactions, clinical response and tolerability.

\*\*The dosing charts cannot be reproduced in this document due to space constraints.

## What if I miss a dose?

If you miss a dose, do not take the missed dose; instead, wait and take your next dose at your usual time. Do not double the dose. If you miss more than 1 dose, contact your healthcare professional for advice.

## How do I store this medication?

Store the perampanel tablets at room temperature (15 to 30°C) in a dry place away from light and heat. Keep out of reach of children.

## Medication blood level test – is it required for perampanel?

Routine monitoring of the concentrations (levels) of perampanel in your blood is usually not required.

## Pregnancy and breastfeeding:

- In general, anti-seizure medications may slightly increase the risk of birth defects. It is important to consult with your healthcare professional for preconception care if you are planning to become pregnant.
- Folic acid supplementation should be started at least 3 months before pregnancy to reduce the risk of birth defects. Speak with your healthcare professional to determine the appropriate dose for you.
- Your physician may advise you to take vitamin K during the last weeks of your pregnancy to decrease the risk of bleeding complications in your newborn baby.
- There is very limited data on the use of perampanel during pregnancy or breastfeeding. The potential benefits of using this medication during pregnancy or breastfeeding must be weighed against any potential risks to your unborn child or breastfed baby; consult with your physician. Do not stop taking your medication(s) or adjust your dosage on your own.

## Warning:

Abrupt withdrawal of any anti-epileptic medication may trigger status epilepticus, a potentially fatal condition of continued seizures without recovery. When there is a need for reduction, discontinuation or substitution of the medication, this should be done gradually and under the physician's care. Never discontinue anti-epileptic medications or make changes in activities unless specifically advised to do so by an attending physician.

This material has been created by Stephanie Chiu, RPh, BCGP, CDE for Epilepsy Toronto in 2024 and is offered to provide general information to the public. It is not intended to be taken as medical advice. Epilepsy Toronto and its advisors accept no liability. Consult your physician and/or neurologist with any questions you may have.