



Carisoprodol (Soma)

Important Notice

This notice is to inform you of a change in our prescribing practices regarding carisoprodol (Soma), due to the specific and unique risks associated with this medication. Our practice has made the difficult, but important decision to not prescribe Soma in the future, since the risks outweigh the benefits.

Quick Facts

- + **The FDA recommends that carisoprodol is only used for a maximum time period of 2-3 weeks, and that it should not be used long-term.**
- + Carisoprodol has poor efficacy in studies as a muscle relaxant.
- + Carisoprodol has been shown to significantly increase overdose risk, especially when combined with other sedatives such as opioids and benzodiazepines. Other muscle relaxers are considered safer in combination with sedatives.
- + Carisoprodol is a skeletal muscle relaxer that has been designated as a controlled substance. Controlled substances are medications that have been restricted due to high risks of side effects and dependence.
- + Carisoprodol is considered dangerous because it has a high potential for misuse and dependence due to its psychoactive effects, which can lead to addiction when taken beyond prescribed usage.
- + Carisoprodol is converted into meprobamate in the body, another substance known for its addictive properties; this can result in severe withdrawal symptoms if abruptly stopped.

Risks

- + **High Potential for Misuse, Dependence and Addiction:**
 - + Carisoprodol can be habit-forming, leading to physical and psychological dependence.
 - + Withdrawal symptoms may occur upon abrupt cessation.
- + **Serious Drug Interactions and Overdose Risk:**
 - + Carisoprodol significantly increases the risk of severe side effects, such as respiratory depression, when combined with:
 - Opioids (pain medications)



- Benzodiazepines (anxiety medications)
- Alcohol
- + High doses, or the use of carisoprodol with these substances, or other depressants significantly increases the risk of overdose.
- + **Central Nervous System Depression:**
 - + Carisoprodol can impair cognitive function, judgment, and coordination.
 - + It can also increase the risk of falls and accidents.
- + **Most Common Side Effects:**
 - + Drowsiness (up to 17% of patients)
 - + Dizziness (up to 8% of patients)
 - + Headache (up to 5% of patients)

If you are currently taking carisoprodol:

We understand this may be a significant change for you. We will work with you to develop a safe and effective tapering plan to gradually discontinue carisoprodol.

If you are considering taking carisoprodol:

We strongly advise against the use of carisoprodol due to the aforementioned risks, and we will be unable to prescribe this medication for you.

Alternatives:

There are several alternative muscle relaxants available that may be considered for you based on your specific medical needs:

- Cyclobenzaprine (Flexeril)
- Methocarbamol (Robaxin)
- Tizanidine (Zanaflex)

These medications have a lower risk of dependence and fewer significant drug interactions.

We encourage you to review the attached handout for more information on the risks of carisoprodol and the reasons for this policy change.

We value your trust and are committed to providing you with the safest and most effective



care possible.

Tapering Information

- + **Carisoprodol must be tapered off over 14 days when taken in high doses or used long term**
 - + If stopped abruptly, withdrawal is likely to occur. Typical withdrawal symptoms include anxiety, insomnia and irritability.

- + **Sample Tapering Plan:**
 - + **Regimen: Carisoprodol 250 or 350 mg by mouth four times daily**
 - **Days 1-3:** take carisoprodol 250/350 mg by mouth three times daily (*reduce by one tablet daily*)
 - **Days 4-6:** take carisoprodol 250/350 mg by mouth twice daily (*reduce by one tablet daily*)
 - **Days 7-9:** take carisoprodol 250/350 mg by mouth once daily (*reduce by one tablet daily*)
 - **Day 10:** skip dose
 - **Day 11:** take carisoprodol 250/350 mg by mouth once daily
 - **Day 12:** skip dose
 - **Day 13:** take carisoprodol 250/350 mg by mouth once daily
 - **Day 14 and on:** stop carisoprodol