Tizanidine

FDA-approved uses:
Short-acting drug for spasticity.

Common off-label uses:
Neuropathic pain conditions of many causes, musculoskeletal pain, chronic pain. Studies have shown tizanidine helpful for muscle pain, neuropathic pain, and some types of headache.

Alternatives:
No medication is required. Non-medication modalities such as physical treatment and psychological treatment, pain interventions, and other medications are potential alternatives.

How it works:
It works through nerve alpha-2-receptor activity as an agonist at those receptors.

Side effects & General risks:
Tizanidine should be used carefully in cases of liver or kidney disease, low blood pressure, or heart conduction problems (QT interval problems).

It should not be used with Luvox or with the antibiotic Cipro (ciprofloxacin). Other drugs that can interact with Zanaflex include acyclovir, cimetidine, famotidine, ticlopidine, zileuton, birth control medications, multiple antibiotics (everything ending in -floxacin), some blood pressure medications and some heart rhythm medications. There may be additional risk if used with methadone.

Common side effects include dry mouth, sleepiness, dizziness, asthenia, infection, constipation, urinary frequency, flu-like feeling, low blood pressure, more spasms, sore throat and runny nose. More serious side effects include liver damage, severe slowing of the heart beat and hallucinations. Tizanidine occasionally causes liver injury. Because of the many drug interactions, it is very important that patients provide an accurate listing of all of their current medications to all of their providers and also to the pharmacist.

This is a supplement to the standardized drug information sheets. Please see the standardized drug information sheet for detailed information about risks, side effects, interactions, and other important information. General risks: Any medication may interfere with the ability to drive, concentrate, or operate machinery; patients must be responsible for their own behavior and should not engage in any dangerous activity if there is any question of impairment. All medications have side effects and drug interactions, some serious, some fatal. Let all of your practitioners and pharmacist know about every substance used. Alcohol, herbals, or illegal drugs are not considered safe with these medications. Assume no medication is safe during pregnancy or while breast feeding. The medication may interfere with birth control. Almost any medication can cause sleepiness, insomnia, dizziness, confusion, hallucinations, anxiety, panic, constipation or diarrhea, headache, chest pain and nausea or vomiting, among others. These could cause physical injury, such as dizziness causing one to fall down stairs. Many reduce blood pressure, which could cause fainting, dizziness, stroke, or other problems. Most medications should NOT be stopped suddenly because of the risk of withdrawal.

Common doses & Time to effect:
The maximum dose of tizanidine is 36mg per day. It is not likely that a patient will reach the maximum dose; most patients do well at lower doses. Common doses include 2mg three times daily. Patients should use the lowest effective dose. There is no need to increase to the next higher dose if the current dose is helpful. Also, patients should not increase to the next higher dose if the present dose is not tolerated.

An example titration schedule that may work for some patients might be:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Morning dose</th>
<th>Afternoon dose</th>
<th>Nighttime dose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>2 mg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2 mg</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>2 mg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 and on</td>
<td>2 mg</td>
<td>2 mg</td>
<td>2 mg</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Financial:**
Dr. Anderson has never received payment in exchange for prescribing a medication. Dr. Anderson has no financial relationship with the company that manufactures tizanidine.

**Insurance coverage:**
Many medications, especially in painful conditions, are off-label as discussed above. Insurance companies do not need to cover medications used off label but typically do provide coverage for most medications that have good scientific evidence. There is no guarantee that any medication will be covered. Since this medication is generic, most insurance plans do provide coverage. However, some insurance plans (including workers compensation plans) limit muscle agents to 14 days.

**Scientific evidence & References:**
Some scientific evidence supportive of the use of the medication is listed in this section. Of course, scientific information changes rapidly and the information listed may become outdated or incorrect overnight. Tizanidine has literature supportive of use in neuropathic pain conditions. It is an alpha-2 adrenergic agonist. Tizanidine has been shown efficacious in reducing neuropathic pain (1,2) and has been shown to be antihyperalgesic (3). Tizanidine has evidence supportive of benefit in chronic migraine treatment (4).

References:

**Disclaimer:**
This is for informational purposes only. This does not replace the instructions you received from Dr. Anderson or any other practitioner, constitute medical treatment, establishment of a patient-physician relationship, constitute any form of recommendation, prescription or medical advice, or imply that the medication is appropriate or FDA approved for any condition. This information may be outdated and is not a complete listing of instructions, doses, uses, or side effects. If this was prescribed to you, you must review this information with your pharmacist and prescriber before starting the medication.