

Health Concerns

Medication Side Effects

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Medication Side Effects

All medications have side effects. Side effects for any given medication may vary from person to person. As we look at the following medications and their side effects, bear in mind that the purpose here is not to provide a complete listing of side effects, but to alert employees of some conditions that may be related to medication side effects.

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When administering medications, it is important that each person receive only the medications that are prescribed for them and that the side effects are properly monitored.

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Any time a new medication is introduced, be alert to obvious symptoms of allergic reaction, such as, difficulty breathing; closing of the throat; swelling of the lips, tongue, or face; hives; irregular or fast heartbeats; chest pain or high blood pressure (blurred vision or severe headache).

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Medications must be given individually and must be properly documented on the Medication Administration Record.

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The Medication Administration Record (M.A.R.) will list each medication that a person is to receive, the dosage and scheduled time for administration. The MAR should be completed only after the medication is actually given.

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Psychotropic medications are medications which change a person's thoughts, mood or behavior.

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Common psychotropic medications include:

Ritalin (Methylphenidate) – ADHD, narcolepsy – side effects include insomnia; nervousness; drowsiness; dizziness; headache; blurred vision; tics; abdominal pain, nausea, or vomiting; decreased appetite or weight loss; or slower weight gain and/ or growth.

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Common psychotropic medications include:

Concerta (Methylphenidate) – ADHD, narcolepsy – side effects include insomnia; nervousness; drowsiness; dizziness; headache; blurred vision; tics; abdominal pain, nausea, or vomiting; decreased appetite or weight loss; or slower weight gain and/ or growth.

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Common psychotropic medications include:

Strattera (Atomoxetine) – ADHD – side effects include upset stomach, nausea, or vomiting; decreased appetite; constipation; dry mouth; insomnia; decreased libido or sexual side effects; menstrual cycle changes; hot flushes or sweating; fatigue; dizziness; or irritability or mood swings.

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Common psychotropic medications include:

Prozac (Fluoxetine HCl) – anti-depressant – side effects include anxiety, nervousness, insomnia, decrease in appetite and subsequent weight loss.

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Common psychotropic medications include:

Paxil (Paroxetine HCl) – anti-depressant – side effects include sweating, nausea, decreased appetite and tremors.

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Common psychotropic medications include:

Effexor (Venlafaxine HCl) – anti-depressant – side effects include anxiety, nervousness, insomnia, decrease in appetite and subsequent weight loss.

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Common psychotropic medications include:

Zoloft (Sertraline HCl) – anti-depressant – side effects include upset stomach, drowsiness, weakness or tiredness, anxiety, insomnia, nightmares, dry mouth, sensitivity to sunlight, changes in appetite and weight.

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Common psychotropic medications include:

Serzone (Nefazodone) – antidepressant – side effects include dizziness, lightheadedness, or drowsiness; upset stomach; insomnia; dry mouth; constipation; blurred or abnormal vision. Notify physician of fainting; or prolonged, painful, or inappropriate erections.

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Common psychotropic medications include:

Remeron (Mirtazapine) – antidepressant – side effects include drowsiness; nausea; increase in weight or appetite; dizziness; dry mouth; constipation; mild tremor. Notify physician of allergic reactions or fever, chills, a sore throat, flu-like symptoms, or sores in mouth or nose.

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Common psychotropic medications include:

Wellbutrin (Bupropion) – antidepressant, smoking cessation – side effects abdominal pain; constipation; decrease in appetite; dizziness; dryness of mouth; increased sweating; nausea or vomiting; trembling or shaking; trouble sleeping; weight loss (unusual); blurred vision; change in sense of taste; drowsiness; fast or irregular heartbeat; frequent urination; muscle pain; sore throat.

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Common psychotropic medications include:

Ambien (Zolpidem) – used to treat insomnia – side effects include headache, drowsiness, dizziness, or clumsiness; nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, or constipation; depression; muscle aches or pains; vivid or abnormal dreams; or amnesia (memory loss) after a dose. Notify physician of an allergic reaction (difficulty breathing; closing of your throat; swelling of your lips, face, or tongue; hives); or hallucinations, abnormal behavior, or severe confusion

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Common psychotropic medications include:

Tranxene (Clorazepate dipotassium) – anti-anxiety, sleep disorders – side effects include drowsiness, dizziness, tiredness, weakness, dry mouth, nausea, diarrhea, changes in appetite.

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Common psychotropic medications include:

Ativan (Lorazepam) – anti-anxiety – side effects include sleepiness, dizziness, weakness and unsteadiness.

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Common psychotropic medications include:

Valium (Diazepam) – anti-anxiety, anticonvulsant – side effects include drowsiness, dizziness, or clumsiness; depression; nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, or constipation; difficulty urinating; vivid dreams; headache; dry mouth; decreased sex drive; changes in behavior.

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Common psychotropic medications include:

BuSpar (Buspirone HCl) – anti-anxiety – side effects include drowsiness, difficulty sleeping, light-headedness, headache, nausea and vomiting, diarrhea, constipation, depression, excitement, fatigue, weakness, numbness.

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Common psychotropic medications include:

Risperdal (Risperidone) – anti-psychotic – side effects include insomnia, agitation, extrapyramidal disorder, anxiety, headache, rhinitis, weight gain.

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Extrapyramidal Side Effects (EPS) describes movement side effects that begin during the early phases of treatment with a neuroleptic drug. Early onset symptoms tend to resolve quickly and completely when the patient is weaned from the offending medication(s).



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Common psychotropic medications include:

Haldol (Haloperidol) – anti-psychotic – side effects include insomnia, restlessness, anxiety, tardive dyskinesia.

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Tardive dyskinesia is a neurological syndrome caused by the long-term use of neuroleptic drugs. Tardive dyskinesia is characterized by repetitive, involuntary, purposeless movements. Features of the disorder may include grimacing, tongue protrusion, lip smacking, puckering and pursing, and rapid eye blinking. Rapid movements of the arms, legs, and trunk may also occur. Involuntary movements of the fingers may appear as though the patient is playing an invisible guitar or piano.

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Common psychotropic medications include:

Geodon (Ziprasidone HCl) – anti-psychotic – side effects include drowsiness, nervousness, confusion, insomnia, restlessness, nausea, diarrhea, constipation, runny nose, increased coughing, dry mouth. Notify physician of signs of tardive dyskinesia, seizures, difficulty breathing, rapid heartbeat.

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Common psychotropic medications include:

Seroquel (Quetiapine) – antipsychotic – side effects include dizziness or drowsiness; agitation; constipation; dry mouth; weight gain; increased blood sugar.

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Common psychotropic medications include:

Zyprexa (Olanzapine) – antipsychotic – side effects include dizziness or drowsiness, agitation, an increased heart rate, constipation, dry mouth, weight gain, or increased blood sugar.

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Common psychotropic medications include:

Loxitane (Loxapine) – antipsychotic – side effects include dizziness or drowsiness, headache, weakness or tremor (shaking), agitation, an increased heart rate, constipation, dry mouth, or weight gain. Notify physician of uncontrollable movements of the mouth, tongue, cheeks, jaw, arms, or legs; or yellowing of your skin or eyes .

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Common psychotropic medications include:

Stelazine (Trifluoperazine HCl) – anti-psychotic – side effects include drowsiness, dizziness or blurred vision, nausea, diarrhea, constipation, restlessness, runny nose, dry mouth, weight gain. Notify physician of signs of tardive dyskinesia, seizures, difficulty breathing, rapid heartbeat.

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Common psychotropic medications include:

Abilify (Aripiprazole) – anti-psychotic – side effects include headache, blurred vision, tremor or weakness, dizziness or drowsiness, nausea, vomiting, or constipation, difficulty sleeping, or weight gain. Notify physician of uncontrollable movements of the mouth, tongue, cheeks, jaw, arms, or legs; seizures; severe restlessness or tremor; fever; muscle rigidity, sweating; irregular pulse; or fast or irregular heartbeats.

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Common psychotropic medications include:

Lithium carbonate – bipolar disorder – side effects include a dry mouth, fine hand tremor, thirst and tiredness. Signs of lithium toxicity include diarrhea, vomiting, excessive urination, drowsiness, lack of coordination, muscular weakness and blurred vision.

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Lithium toxicity is a serious condition. If you notice any of these symptoms, (diarrhea, vomiting, excessive urination, drowsiness, lack of coordination, muscular weakness and blurred vision) take immediate action.

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Other common medications include:

Phenobarbital – seizure disorders, insomnia – side effects include drowsiness and dizziness. Other side effects may include stomach upset, headache, weakness, grogginess or dreaming. Notify the doctor if you notice: chest pain, rapid heart rate, nosebleeds, confusion, hallucinations.

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Other common medications include:

Tegretol (Carbamazepine) – anticonvulsant – side effects may include drowsiness, dizziness or blurred vision, stomach upset, loss of appetite, dry mouth, acne, excessive growth of body hair, mood changes, muscle aches, and restlessness. This drug can increase sensitivity to sunlight. Avoid prolonged exposure to the sun, wear a sunscreen and protective clothing.

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Other common medications include:

Lamictal (Lamotrigine) – anticonvulsant – side effects include Constipation; diarrhea; dryness of mouth; indigestion; loss of strength; menstrual pain; pain; runny nose; slurred speech; trembling or shaking; trouble in sleeping; unusual weight loss; anxiety, confusion, depression, irritability, or other mood changes; chest pain; continuous, uncontrolled back and forth and/or rolling eye movements; infection.

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Other common medications include:

Dilantin (Phenytoin sodium) – seizure disorders, epilepsy – side effects include constipation, dizziness and drowsiness. If these effects continue or worsen, inform the doctor. May cause enlargement of the gums. This can be minimized by maintaining good oral hygiene with regular brushing, flossing and massaging of the gums.

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Other common medications include:

Depakene (Valproic acid) – seizure disorders – side effects include mild stomach pain, loss of appetite, change in menstrual periods, diarrhea, mild hair loss, unsteadiness, dizziness, drowsiness, rash or headache might occur.

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Other common medications include:

*Trileptal (Oxcarbazepine) – seizure disorders – side effects include headache; mild sleepiness or fatigue; nausea, vomiting, or stomach pain; tremor; dizziness; rash; diarrhea, constipation, or decreased appetite; weight gain; dry mouth. Notify physician of allergic reactions, **low blood sodium**; difficulty with concentration, speech, or language; excessive sleepiness or fatigue; a loss of coordination or trouble walking; double vision, blurred vision, or other visual disturbances; or increasing frequency or worsening of seizures.*

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Symptoms of low blood sodium include nausea, general discomfort, headache, extreme drowsiness, or confusion

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Other common medications include:

Symmetrel (Amantadine) – Antidyskinetic, systemic antiviral – Side effects may include anxious, confused, or irritable feeling; blurred vision; nausea; trouble sleeping; unusual dreams. Notify physician immediately of fever, fast heartbeat, mood changes, uncontrolled muscle movements, rapid breathing; lightheadedness or fainting; problems with urination; slow or irregular heartbeat; swelling in the hands, ankles, or feet; unusual thoughts or behavior, thoughts of hurting oneself.

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Other common medications include:

Catapres (Clonidine) – anti-hypertensive – side effects include unusual fatigue, dizziness, or tiredness; headache; constipation, nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea; insomnia; dry mouth.

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Other common medications include:

Klonopin (Clonazepam) – seizure disorders, panic attacks – side effects include indigestion, change in appetite, nausea, seizures, drowsiness, dizziness, headache, tiredness or weakness. Mood changes, sleeplessness, excessive hair growth or loss of hair, blurred vision, dry mouth, sore gums, muscle pain, and weight changes may also occur.
