
Common Side Effects of Psychiatric Medications—A Fact Sheet for Everyone

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Introduction

Psychiatric meds help a lot but can also cause side effects. Here are some key points to keep in mind:

- Side effects usually start soon after taking a new medicine but often get better within a week as your body adjusts.
- Most side effects are more annoying than harmful.
- If a side effect keeps bothering you, your doctor can help by changing the dose, trying a different medicine, or giving you something to help with the side effect.
- If you stop the medicine, the side effects will usually go away.

Possible Side Effects from Different Types of Medications

Antipsychotics (Medicines like Risperdal, Zyprexa, Haldol, Abilify)

- Feeling tired or sleepy
- Feeling restless or like you can't sit still
- Gaining weight or feeling hungrier than usual
- Higher sugar levels in your blood
- Higher cholesterol
- Getting dizzy or lightheaded when standing up
- Dry mouth or drooling
- Constipation
- Trouble peeing
- Shaking or slow movements

Antidepressants (Medicines like Prozac, Zoloft, Lexapro)

- Feeling sick to your stomach
- Headaches
- Feeling nervous or shaky
- Constipation
- Diarrhea
- Sweating more
- Stomach ache
- Gaining weight

- Feeling sleepy or having trouble sleeping
- Dizziness
- Less interest in sex or having trouble with sex
- Feeling emotionally "numb"

Mood Stabilizers (Medicines like Lithium, Depakote, Lamictal)

- Upset stomach or diarrhea
- Weight gain
- Feeling shaky or trembly
- Thirsty more often
- Going to the bathroom a lot
- Problems with memory or concentration
- Hair loss or skin changes
- Feeling tired or weak

Anti-Anxiety Medications (Medicines like Xanax, Valium, Ativan)

- Feeling sleepy or tired
- Dizziness or unsteadiness
- Confusion
- Memory problems
- Slow reflexes or movements
- Dependency (feeling like you need the medicine to feel okay)

Remember, if you're experiencing any of these symptoms, talk to your doctor. There are many options to alleviate side effects without compromising your well-being. Your health and comfort are paramount.