

Medications & Their Side Effects



There are many other types of medications used, these listed are the most common in children and adolescents

Medication Type	Common Medications	Common Side Effects	Serious Side Effects	Recommended Lab Work & Monitoring
Antipsychotics* <i>(old/typical/first generation)</i>	Haldol (haloperidol) Trilafon (perphenazine) Thorazine (chlorpromazine)	Extrapyramidal Side Effects (akathisia, dystonia, muscle stiffness, tardive dyskinesia), dry mouth, eyes, constipation, weight gain, ED, sedation, low blood pressure, vision changes	Neuroleptic Malignant Syndrome (potentially fatal), seizures, cardiac effects, movement disorders (EPS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete blood count (baseline) Comprehensive metabolic panel (liver/kidney function) EKG (QT interval monitoring) Prolactin (if breast changes or galactorrhea occur) Creatine kinase (if Neuroleptic Malignant Syndrome suspected)
Antipsychotics* <i>(new/atypical/second generation)</i>	Seroquel (quetiapine) Abilify (aripiprazole) Risperdal (risperidone)	Weight gain, increased cholesterol, insulin resistance (diabetes development), headache, agitation, insomnia, akathisia, tremor, fatigue, liver impairment, breast changes, vision changes	Neuroleptic Malignant Syndrome (less common), Extrapyramidal Side Effects (less common), death (cardiac or diabetic)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fasting Glucose / HbA1c (baseline and annually) Lipid Panel (baseline and annually) Weight / BMI monitoring Comprehensive metabolic panel (liver function) Prolactin (if breast changes or galactorrhea occur) EKG (for QT-prolonging agents or cardiac risk)
ADHD Medications* <i>(stimulants)</i>	Adderall (dextroamphetamine and amphetamine salts) Focalin (dexmethylphenidate) Ritalin (methylphenidate)	Loss of appetite, headache, insomnia, abdominal pain, weight loss, anxiety, vomiting, increased heart rate, infection, nausea, emotional lability/mood swings/irritability, dizziness, diarrhea, tics	Abuse/dependence, sudden death (cardiac), toxic psychosis (rare), Tourette's Syndrome (rare), CNS overstimulation, upper respiratory tract infections, changes in menses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blood pressure and heart rate (baseline and periodic) EKG (baseline if cardiac history or symptoms) Weight and growth monitoring (especially in children / adolescents) Liver Function Test (rare, only if clinically indicated)

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ADHD Medications (nonstimulants)	Tenex (guanfacine) Kapvay/Intuniv (clonidine) <i>Note: Guanfacine ER and Clonidine ER are often used for ADHD and sleep/aggression support</i>	Headache, dizziness, fatigue, skin reactions, dry mouth, constipation, low blood pressure, anxiety, nightmares, insomnia, abdominal pain, decreased appetite	Upper respiratory tract infection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blood pressure and heart rate (baseline and periodically) EKG (if bradycardia or cardiac symptoms suspected) Comprehensive metabolic panel (monitor electrolytes and liver function if needed)
SSRIs (selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors)	Prozac (fluoxetine) Zoloft (sertraline) Lexapro (escitalopram)*	GI upset, headaches, sleep changes, irritability, behavioral activation	Suicidal thoughts (especially early in treatment), serotonin syndrome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mood changes / increased agitation Suicidal ideation Appetite / weight changes
SNRIs (selective norepinephrine reuptake inhibitors)	Cymbalta (duloxetine) Effexor XR (venlafaxine)	GI upset, headaches, sleep changes, irritability, behavioral activation, sweating, increased heart rate, fatigue	Increased risk of behavioral activation, elevated blood pressure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blood pressure Mood / behavioral shifts Adherence to prescription

Medications That May Require Extra Caution In Young Children

Antipsychotic*: May be necessary for severe behaviors, but carry significant metabolic and neurological risks; close monitoring is essential.

ADHD Medications (stimulants)*: High dosages can cause emotional instability, appetite suppression, and increased anxiety. Start low and monitor closely.

Trazodone: Often used for sleep, but sedation can be excessive in young children. Use with caution.

Polypharmacy with sedatives (Clonidine, Hydroxyzine, Trazodone combinations): Increases risk of daytime grogginess, cognitive dulling and safety concerns.

SSRIs / SNRIs in youth: Evaluate for increased irritability or restlessness, sleep changes or nightmares, sudden mood swings, talk about death/self-harm, appetite changes or weight loss, physical complaints (e.g., stomach or headaches) that may indicate emotional distress.

Managing Common Side Effects

Headache	Nausea / GI Issues	Dry Mouth	Sexual Dysfunction	Fatigue, Sedation or Somnolence	Weight Gain
<p>Acetaminophen (unless liver concerns)</p> <p>Ibuprophen (unless kidney concerns)</p> <p>Adequate hydration</p> <p>Rest in a dark room</p> <p>Heat/massage therapy</p> <p>Gentle pressure</p> <p>Massage</p> <p>Change medication if persistent</p>	<p>Constipation: exercise, fiber, increased fluid intake</p> <p>Diarrhea: probiotics, zero sugar sports drinks</p> <p>Nausea: take medication with food, small frequent meals, bland foods (if vomiting, switch medications)</p>	<p>Regular dental appointments</p> <p>Chew hard candy or gum (sugar free)</p> <p>Increase water intake</p> <p>Low sugar/acid diet</p>	<p>Avoid other substances that contribute</p> <p>Consider adding Wellbutrin or ED medications (men)</p> <p>Change medication if persistent</p>	<p>Reduce dose</p> <p>Switch to bedtime</p> <p>Change medication If persistent</p>	<p>Exercise</p> <p>Reduce caloric intake</p> <p>Eat more slowly</p> <p>Increase water intake</p> <p>Ensure adequate sleep</p> <p>Change medication if persistent or severe</p>

Severe Side Effects

Antipsychotics	ADHD Medications	Antidepressants (SSRIs / SNRIs)	Other Serious Side Effects
Changes in movements Muscle rigidity Tremors Confusion / change in mental capabilities Drooling Excessive sedation	Chest pain Extreme aggression or agitation, paranoia, hallucinations Seizures New or worsening tics	Comments about self-harm or suicide Extreme agitation or confusion Seizures Muscle rigidity or tremors	Dark urine Rash and / or blistering Sedation interfering with daily life

If you notice any “Severe Side Effects,” or other abrupt changes in the child’s behavior or mental status, immediately contact the child’s medical provider to identify next steps.



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APMRT Referrals