

Common Medicines in Autism

Medicine Type	Target Behaviors	Possible Common Side Effects	
Stimulant Medicines <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • methylphenidate (Ritalin, Metadate, Concerta, Methylin, Daytrana) • dexamethylphenidate (Focalin) • mixed amphetamine salts (Adderall) • dextroamphetamine (Dexedrine) • lisdexamfetamine (Vyvanse) 	Hyperactivity (high activity level) Short attention span Impulsive behaviors	Common: Problems falling asleep Less appetite Irritability/emotional outbursts	Less common: Tics Anxiety, depression Repeating behaviors and thoughts Headaches Diarrhea Social withdrawal Changes in heart rate or rhythm*
Atomoxetine (Strattera)	Hyperactivity (high activity level) Short attention span Impulsive behaviors	Common: Sleepiness GI problems (nausea, vomiting, constipation, low appetite)	Less common: Thoughts of harming self, suicide*
Alpha Agonists Medicines <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • guanfacine (Tenex, Intuniv) • clonidine (Catapres, Catapres TTS, Kapvay) 	Hyperactivity (high activity level) Short attention span Impulsive behaviors Sleep problems Tics	Common: Sleepiness Low blood pressure Irritability	Less common: Constipation High blood pressure if stopped quickly
Anti-anxiety Medicines <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fluoxetine (Prozac) • fluvoxamine (Luvox) • sertraline (Zoloft) • paroxetine (Paxil) • citalopram (Celexa) • escitalopram (Lexapro) 	Depression Anxiety Repeating thoughts Repeating behaviors	Common: GI problems (nausea, vomiting, constipation, low appetite) Headaches Problems falling asleep Sleepiness Agitation/ increased activity level Weight gain	Less common: Seizures Heart rhythm problems* Thoughts of harming self, suicide* Serotonin syndrome
Second Generation/ Atypical Antipsychotics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • risperidone (Risperdal) • olanzapine (Zyprexa) • quetiapine (Seroquel) • aripiprazole (Abilify) • ziprasidone (Geodon) 	Irritability Aggression Self-injury Tantrums Sleep problems Hyperactivity (High activity level) Repeating behaviors Tics	Common: Sleepiness Drooling Increased appetite/ weight gain	Less common: High cholesterol High blood sugar, diabetes Movement side effects** Seroquel –eye side effects Geodon – heart side effects
Seizure Medicines <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • carbamazepine (Tegretol, Carbatrol) • valproic acid (Depakote, Depakene) • lamotrigine (Lamictal) • oxcarbazepine (Trileptal) • topiramate (Topamax) 	Seizures Mood problems Aggression Self-injury	Common: Rashes Sleepiness Nausea, vomiting Memory problems	Less common: Hepatitis, liver failure Pancreatitis Bone marrow suppression Tremor, dizziness

Additional information on specific medicines: <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/druginformation.html>

*Boxed and black boxed warning: Page 22 for more information

**Movement disorder side effects: Page 22 for more information