

Medications That May Impair Mental Function

Many drugs—particularly when taken at high doses or for an extended time—can cause symptoms of dementia. Older adults are most likely to experience this problem and to have it confused with a permanent memory deficit. So if a loved one is being evaluated for dementia, be sure to bring all of his or her medication bottles to the doctor’s office.

Dementia caused by medication can be treated by halting the drug (if possible), switching to another one, or lowering the dosage. The following are some of the more common medications that may cause memory loss. If you are taking one of these drugs and are concerned about memory side effects, talk to your doctor before making any changes.

Drug Category	Generic Name	Brand Name
Allergy and cold medications	brompheniramine chlorpheniramine diphenhydramine pseudoephedrine	Bromfed, Bromfenex Chlor-Trimeton, Sinutab Sinus Allergy Benadryl Afrin, Sinutab, Sudafed
Antibiotics	cephalexin ciprofloxacin metronidazole ofloxacin	Biocef, Keflex Cipro Flagyl Floxin
Anticholinergic	scopolamine	Transderm-Scop
Anticonvulsants	carbamazepine phenytoin valproate	Carbatrol, Epitol, Tegretol Dilantin Depakene, Depakote
Antidepressants	amitriptyline desipramine doxepin imipramine nortriptyline	Elavil, Vanatrip Norpramin Sinequan Tofranil Pamelor
Antipsychotic drugs	chlorpromazine haloperidol	Thorazine Haldol
Cancer drugs	chlorambucil cytarabine interleukin-2 (aldesleukin)	Leukeran Cytosar-U Proleukin
Heart disease medications	amiodarone digoxin disopyramide quinidine tocainide	Cordarone Lanoxin Norpace Cardioquin, Quinidex Extentabs, Quin-Release Tonocard
High blood pressure drugs	atenolol methyldopa metoprolol nifedipine prazosin propranolol verapamil	Tenormin Aldomet Lopressor Adalat, Procardia Minipress Inderal Calan, Isoptin, Covera, Verelan

Drug Category	Generic Name	Brand Name
Immunosuppressive drugs	cyclosporine interferon	Neoral, Sandimmune Infergen
Mania medication	lithium	Eskalith, Lithobid
Nausea medications	hydroxyzine metoclopramide prochlorperazine promethazine	Atarax, Vistaril Metoclopramide Intensole, Octamide, Reglan Compazine Phenergan
Pain medications	aspirin baclofen codeine cyclobenzaprine hydrocodone hydrocortisone (cortisol) ibuprofen indomethacin meperidine methocarbamol naproxen oxycodone prednisone propoxyphene sulindac	Anacin, Bayer, Bufferin, Easprin, ZORprin Lioresal combined with other medications, such as acetaminophen (Tylenol) plus codeine Flexeril combined with other medications, such as hydrocodone and ibuprofen (Vicoprofen) Cortef, Hydrocortone, Solu-Cortef Advil, Motrin Indocin Demerol Robaxin Naprosyn OxyContin, Roxicodone Deltasone, Prednicot, Prednisone Intensole, Sterapred Darvon-N Clinoril
Parkinson’s disease drugs	benztropine bromocriptine entacapone levodopa pergolide trihexyphenidyl	Cogentin Parlodel Comtan Larodopa, Sinemet Permax Trihexane, Trihexy-2, Trihexy-5
Sedatives	alprazolam chloral hydrate clonazepam diazepam diphenhydramine flurazepam lorazepam	Xanax Aquachloral, Noctec Klonopin Valium Somnifex Dalmane Ativan
Ulcer/acid reflux medications	cimetidine ranitidine	Tagamet HB Zantac 75