

MEDICATION INFORMATION

The following medications have been identified by pharmaceutical experts as problematic for elders who take them. Never just stop taking a medication. Also consult with your health care provider and your pharmacist. However, be a good advocate. Do not let your observations simply be brushed off. Side-effects of prescription drugs cause serious problems for elders, even in medical settings. Too often no one is paying careful attention and they do not see the dramatic change that has occurred and associate it with the medication. Persevere in pursuing the possibility. An elder's life may depend on it.

COGNITIVE PROBLEMS THAT LOOK LIKE DEMENTIA

A class of drugs known as *Anticholinergics* have been found to cause serious thinking problems, confusion, and other symptoms. They are used to treat allergies, to help a person sleep, or for over-active bladders. Some of the more popular ones include:

Benadryl

Demerol

Detrol

Dramamine

Elavil

Enablex

Excedrin

Nytol
Paxil
Sominex
Tylenol PM
Unisom
Vesicare



Another class of drugs known as *Benzodiazepines* have been found in numerous studies to cause dizziness, unsteady gait, memory problems, anxiety, insomnia, musculoskeletal problems, drowsiness, disorientation, swallowing disorders, speech distortion, poor concentration, incontinence, diarrhea, and excessive saliva. This class of drugs is particularly likely to become more toxic to a person as they age, so if they tolerated it at 45 does not mean they can at 75. Those in this class with some of the most serious side-effects include:

Ambien
Ativan
Bromazepam
Dalmane
Doral
Dormonox
Halcion/Triazolam
Klonopin
Lexotan

Librium
Lorazepam
Lunesta
Mogadon/Nitrazepam
Prosom/Estazolam
Restoril/Temazepam
Serax/Oxazepam
Tranxene
Unisom
Valium
Vesicare
Versed/Midasolam
Xanax



The class of drugs known as *Opiates* are commonly used for pain management but can cause serious cognitive problems in older adults. Typical side-effects include drowsiness, constipation, confusion, delirium, nausea, muscle twitching, and shortness of breath. They include the following drugs:

Demerol
Fentanyl (Duragesic, Fentora, Actigal)
Hydrocodone
Lorcet
Lorcet Plus
Lortab
Norco

Oxycodone
Oxycontin 40
Percocet
Percodan
RMS MS Contin
Morphine
Vicodin
Vicodin ES

Other drugs such as high dosages of Gabapentin, used for nerve damage or over-the counter sleep aids such as Tylenol PM can also cause serious cognitive problems.

***Cox 2 Inhibitors* – used for arthritis or similar problems can cause nausea, dizziness, headache, drowsiness, and constipation along with serious cognitive problems. These include:**

Cerebrex
Tramadol

Blood pressure medications also need to be carefully monitored. If blood pressure becomes too low, it can cause dizziness, falls, and cognitive problems.

