

Common Drugs For Dementia

The most commonly prescribed types of other medications are listed below:

Anxiolytics

Dementia can be a frightening and worrying process for individuals as they lose their abilities and independence. If the anxiety is mild, it can be managed without medication, for instance by finding ways to relieve stress through exercise or meditation. However, more severe responses, such as panic attacks and emotional outbursts, may need to be treated with anxiolytics, medications that help calm and relax.

Common Drugs (Generic Name):

- Ativan® (lorazepam)
- Buspar® (buspirone)
- Klonopin® (clonazepam)
- Serax® (oxazepam)
- Valium® (diazepam) Xanax® (alprazolam)

Antidepressants

Many individuals with dementia also experience depression. Loss of mobility, interactions with the world, and independence can result in a loss of appetite, fatigue, and a lack of interest in daily activities. Antidepressants may help improve both mood and function for these people.

Common Drugs (Generic Name):

- Aventyl® (nortriptyline)
- Celexa® (citalopram)
- Effexor® (venlafaxine)
- Paxil® (paroxetine)
- Prozac® (fluoxetine)
- Zoloft® (sertraline)

Antipsychotics

As dementia progresses, the grasp on the difference between fact and fiction, real and imagined, becomes blurred. As this happens, people with dementia may have hallucinations or believe that other people are "out to get them." Sometimes, the person may become agitated, uncooperative, or even hostile. Antipsychotics are prescribed in these more serious cases to help manage these difficult behaviors when anxiolytics may not be enough.

Common Drugs (Generic Name):

- Abilify® (aripiprazole)
- Clozaril® (clozapine)
- Geodon® (ziprasidone)
- Risperdal® (risperidone)
- Seroquel® (quetiapine)
- Zyprexa® (olanzapine)

Hypnotics

Individuals with dementia can also have difficulties getting to sleep or staying asleep. Many of the medications commonly prescribed to dementia patients can fatigue them during the day. This may make it harder for them to get to sleep or to sleep through the night. Some caregivers find it useful to limit the number of naps their loved ones take during the day. If increasing their daily activity does not help, hypnotics may help them find restful sleep.

Common Drugs (Generic Name):

- Ambien® (zolpidem)
- Restoril® (temazepam)
- Sonata® (zaleplon)

The purpose for many of these medications is to protect and promote the safety and well-being of the individuals with dementia and those around them. There are often ways to address the problematic behaviors and symptoms that can reduce or remove the need for a pharmacological solution. However, these decisions are best made in cooperation with your loved one's physician. Additionally, particular forms of dementia may not benefit as well from some of these drugs, so be sure that you and your physician are aware of the individual's diagnosis and its particular needs.