

# Post-Partum Medication Side Effects

Your doctor has recommended medication to help you get better after the birth of your baby. Many medications can cause **side effects** (unplanned reactions in the body). The table below lists medication names next to their side effects. While in the hospital, talk to your nurse about any side effects you have. After you leave the hospital, if you have any of the serious side effects listed for your medication, contact your doctor right away.

Other serious side effects are also possible. If you have symptoms not listed here or any concerns about your medications, talk to your medical team.

**NOTE:** All medications have the potential to cause an allergic reaction.

Get medical help right away if:

- Your breathing becomes difficult
- You get a rash or hives

If you have any of the serious side effects that are listed with your medication, contact your doctor immediately.



Use	Medication: generic name (Brand)	Common side effects	Serious side effects
<b>Mild pain relief</b>	acetaminophen (Tylenol)	Nausea, vomiting, problems sleeping	Dark urine, tiredness, yellow skin, light-colored stool (poop)
<b>Pain relief (not opioid)</b>	gabapentin (Neurontin)	Dizziness, sleepiness, weakness, diarrhea	
<b>Moderate/severe pain relief (opioids)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• hydromorphone (Dilaudid)</li> <li>• hydrocodone/acetaminophen (Norco, Lortab)</li> <li>• morphine (Avinzo, Kadian, MS Contin)</li> <li>• fentanyl (Duragesic)</li> <li>• oxycodone /acetaminophen (Percocet)</li> </ul>	Constipation, dizziness, sleepiness, nausea, vomiting, headache	Extreme sleepiness
<b>Reduction of mild/moderate pain, cramping, and swelling (anti-inflammatory)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• naproxen (Anaprox, Aleve)</li> <li>• ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil)</li> <li>• ketorolac (Toradol)</li> </ul>	Stomach upset, constipation (can't poop), diarrhea, dizziness, gas, heartburn	Severe back or stomach pain, vomiting blood or vomit that looks like coffee grounds, poop that is bloody or is black and sticky like tar
<b>Vaginal area care (used on surface to reduce pain and swelling)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• hydrocortisone (Anusol)</li> <li>• benzocaine (Dermoplast)</li> <li>• witch hazel (Tucks)</li> <li>• dibucaine (Nupercainal)</li> </ul>	Mild skin irritation	
<b>Bowel care (to prevent or treat constipation)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• docusate (Colace)</li> <li>• bisacodyl (Docolax)</li> <li>• polyethylene glycol (Miralax)</li> <li>• magnesium hydroxide (MOM)</li> </ul>	Stomach pain or cramps, diarrhea, gas	Severe diarrhea
<b>Itching relief</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• diphenhydramine (Benadryl)</li> <li>• nalbuphine (Nubain)</li> </ul>	Sleepiness, dizziness, dry mouth, dry eyes	Increased heart rate, inability to urinate (pee)



Use	Medication	Common side effects	Serious side effects
<b>Prevent seizures</b>	magnesium sulfate	Diarrhea, weakness, flushing (red face or skin), low blood pressure	Weakness, slurred speech, nausea, vomiting, tremor, extreme sleepiness, difficulty breathing, involuntary movements
<b>Nausea relief</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• promethazine (Phenergan)</li> <li>• ondansetron (Zofran)</li> <li>• scopolamine (TransdermScop)</li> <li>• metoclopramide (Reglan)</li> </ul>	Headache, dizziness, confusion, sleepiness <b>promethazine &amp; scopolamine:</b> Dry eyes/dry mouth	<b>Phenergan:</b> Excessive sleepiness or pain in hands/fingers <b>metoclopramide:</b> Restlessness
<b>Bleeding control</b> (reduces uterine bleeding)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• oxytocin (Pitocin)</li> <li>• methylergonovine (Methergine)</li> <li>• misoprostol (Cytotec)</li> </ul>	Headache, nausea, vomiting, cramping <b>Methergine &amp; Cytotec:</b> Diarrhea	Severe headache, feeling lightheaded
<b>Sleep aid</b>	zolpidem (Ambien)	Dizziness, headache, feeling lightheaded	Seeing things that aren't there, confusion
<b>To prevent or treat bacterial infections</b> (antibiotics)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• penicillin (Pen VK)</li> <li>• gentamicin</li> <li>• ampicillin (Omnipen)</li> <li>• ampicillin/sulbactam (Unasyn)</li> <li>• cefazolin (Ancef)</li> <li>• clindamycin (Cleocin)</li> <li>• ceftriaxone (Rocephin)</li> </ul>	Diarrhea, nausea, stomach upset, headache <b>clindamycin:</b> Metallic taste, body aches	Severe diarrhea <b>gentamicin:</b> Hearing changes, decreased urine (pee) output
<b>Gas reduction and prevention</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• simethicone (Gas-X)</li> <li>• AlOH/MgOH/simethicone (Mylanta)</li> </ul>	Constipation, chalky taste	
<b>Protect skin</b> (sore or cracked nipples)	lanolin (Lan-O-Soothe)	No frequent side effects	
<b>Reduce high blood pressure</b> (anti-hypertensive)	labetalol (Trandate)	Nausea, dizziness (mostly when you stand up), weakness	Chest pain
<b>Improve blood iron levels</b> (often low in pregnancy or after blood loss)	ferrous sulfate (Ferodan)	Constipation, nausea, dark poop, heartburn	

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