

Side Effects of Common Medicines Given After Delivery

Your doctor has recommended medicine to help you get better after the birth of your baby. Many medicines can cause side effects (unplanned reactions in the body). The table below lists the names of common medicines, what they are used for, and the side effects. While in the hospital, talk to your nurse about any side effects that you have. If you have any of the serious side effects listed for your medicines after you leave the hospital, **contact your doctor immediately**. Other serious side effects are also possible. If you have symptoms not listed below or any concerns about your medicines, talk to your medical team.

Note: All medicines 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 listed with your medicine, contact your doctor immediately.

Use	Medicine: generic name (Brand)	Common side effects	Serious side effects (Contact nurse immediately)
Non-opioid pain relief Relieves mild pain	acetaminophen (Tylenol)	Nausea, vomiting	Severe allergic reaction including skin rash, itching or hives, swelling of the face, lips, or tongue; dark urine (pee); extreme sleepiness; yellow skin; light-colored stools (poops)
Opioid pain relief Relieves moderate-to-severe pain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fentanyl • hydromorphone (Dilaudid) • hydrocodone + acetaminophen (Norco, Lortab) • morphine • oxycodone • oxycodone + acetaminophen (Percocet) 	Constipation, dizziness, drowsiness, dry mouth or throat, headache, itching, nausea, or vomiting	Severe allergic reaction including skin rash, itching or hives, swelling of the face, lips, or tongue; dark urine (pee); difficulty breathing; extreme sleepiness, yellow skin; light-colored stools (poops)
Anti-inflammatory Relieves mild-to-moderate pain and cramping; reduces swelling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil) • naproxen (Aleve, Anaprox, Naprosyn) • ketorolac (Toradol) 	Dizziness, gas, headache, heartburn, nausea, stomach upset or discomfort	Severe allergic reaction, severe chest pain, severe stomach pain, stools (poops) that are bloody or dark and tarry, vomiting that looks like blood or coffee grounds

Use	Medicine: generic name (Brand)	Common side effects	Serious side effects (Contact nurse immediately)
Non-opioid pain relief Relieves moderate-to-severe pain not relieved by other medicines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> gabapentin (Neurontin) 	Blurred vision, dizziness, drowsiness, fatigue, loss of coordination, nausea or vomiting, swelling in the limbs, weakness	Severe allergic reaction including skin rash, itching or hives, swelling of the face, lips, or tongue; difficulty breathing; severe skin reaction; thoughts of suicide or self harm
Vaginal skin or surface pain relief Relieves pain and swelling in the vaginal area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> benzocaine-menthol (Dermoplast) dibucaine (Nupercainal) hydrocortisone (AnuSol) witch hazel (Tucks) 	Mild burning, dryness, itching, or irritation in the area where medicine is applied or placed	Severe allergic reaction including widespread skin rash, itching or hives
Bowel care Prevents and relieves constipation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> bisacodyl (Ducolax) docusate (Colace) magnesium hydroxide (milk of magnesia) polyethylene glycol 3350 (Miralax) senna/docusate (Senna -S) 	Stomach pain or cramps, diarrhea, gas	Severe allergic reaction, severe diarrhea
Itching relief Relieves itching, which can be a side effect from opioid pain medicines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> cetirizine (Zyrtec) diphenhydramine (Benadryl) nalbuphine (Nubain) 	Dizziness, drowsiness, dry eyes, mouth, or throat, headache, nausea, vomiting, sweating or clamminess Cetirizine is usually very well-tolerated and has few side effects	Severe allergic reaction, difficulty breathing, increased heart rate, inability to urinate (pee), or extreme sleepiness
Seizure control Prevents seizures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> magnesium sulfate 	Drowsiness or fatigue, flushing (reddened face or skin), sweating or warmth, low blood pressure, nausea	Severe allergic reaction, severe chest pain, difficulty breathing, slurred speech, severe weakness
Bleeding control Helps control and reduce serious bleeding from the uterus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> carboprost (Hemabate) methylergonovine (Methergine) misoprostol (Cytotec) oxytocin (Pitocin) tranexamic acid or "TXA" (Cyklokapron) 	Diarrhea, dizziness, dry throat or mouth, increased heart rate, hot flashes or flushing (reddened face or skin), nausea, vomiting, muscle or uterine cramping	Severe allergic reaction, blood clot, difficulty breathing, high blood pressure, severe headache, seizure, severe skin reaction, stroke, severe uterine cramping, blurred or changed vision

Use	Medicine: generic name (Brand)	Common side effects	Serious side effects (Contact nurse immediately)
Sleeping aid Helps begin and maintain sleep	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • zolpidem (Ambien) 	Dizziness, lasting drowsiness, headache, lightheadedness	Severe allergic reaction including swelling of the face, lips, or tongue; difficulty breathing; confusion; hallucinations; unusual sleep habits; thoughts of suicide or self-harm; vision changes
Antibiotics Prevent or treat bacterial infections in mom and baby	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ampicillin • ampicillin/sulbactam (Unasyn) • azithromycin (Zithromax) • cefazolin (Ancef, Kefzol) • ceftriaxone (Rocephin) • clindamycin (Cleocin) • ertapenem (Invanz) • erythromycin • gentamicin • nitrofurantoin (Macrobid) • piperacillin/tazobactam (Zosyn) • vancomycin 	Diarrhea, headache, nausea, stomach upset or pain, vomiting Clindamycin-specific: metallic taste	Severe allergic reaction, including skin rash, difficulty breathing; severe diarrhea, significant decrease in urination (not peeing enough) Gentamicin-specific: hearing changes Vancomycin-specific: hearing changes, spreading red rash on upper body, significant dizziness, low blood pressure
Nausea relief Relieves nausea and pain, reduces anxiety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • haloperidol (Haldol) • metoclopramide (Reglan) • ondansetron (Zofran) • prochlorperazine (Compazine) • promethazine (Phenergan) • scopolamine skin patch (Transderm Scop) 	Confusion, dizziness, drowsiness, dry eyes or mouth, headache Scopolamine-specific: agitation, memory loss, rash or red, irritated skin where patch is placed, blurred vision	Severe allergic reaction, excessive drowsiness, uncontrolled body movements Promethazine injection-specific: pain or discomfort near site where medicine is being given Scopolamine-specific: extreme confusion or disorientation, severe mood changes or hallucinations, trouble urinating (peeing) or severe pain when urinating, severe vision changes

Use	Medicine: generic name (Brand)	Common side effects	Serious side effects (Contact nurse immediately)
Gas relief Prevents and reduces stomach gas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • simethicone (Gas-X) • aluminum hydroxide, magnesium hydroxide, simethicone (Maalox, Mylanta) 	Generally few side effects, but may have constipation or mild diarrhea, stomach cramps, stool (poop) discoloration, unpleasant chalky taste	Severe stomach pain
Heartburn relief Prevents and reduces stomach gas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • calcium carbonate (Mylanta, Tums) • famotidine (Pepcid) • magnesium hydroxide (milk of magnesia) • pantoprazole (Protonix) • sodium citrate and citric acid (Bicitra) 	Constipation or diarrhea, gas, headache, nausea, stomach pain, vomiting	Severe allergic reaction, severe skin reaction
Skin protection Provides relief of sore or cracked nipples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lanolin (Lan-O-Soothe) 	Well-tolerated with no common side effects	
High blood pressure control Lowers blood pressure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • hydralazine • labetalol • nifedipine 	Dizziness, flushing (reddened face or skin), headache, lightheadedness, muscle cramps, nausea, tiredness, vomiting Labetalol-specific: tingling on the skin	Severe allergic reaction (including swelling of the face, lips, or tongue), difficulty breathing, severe chest pain, fast heartbeat, severe skin reaction, severe stomach pain
Iron supplements Improve iron levels in your blood which can be low in pregnancy or after blood loss	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ferodan, ferrous sulfate: given by mouth (by mouth, or oral) • Venofer, iron sucrose: given by IV (in the veins, or IV) 	Oral iron product-specific: constipation, dark stools (poops), gas, heartburn, painful or upset stomach IV iron product-specific: diarrhea, headache	Severe allergic reaction (including swelling of the face, lips, or tongue, difficulty breathing), severe chest pain, severe stomach pain or upset

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