

MEDICATION SIDE EFFECTS – LABOR AND DELIVERY

For medications commonly used before, during, and after delivery

Note: epidural medications are not included; ask the provider that places the epidural for information on the medications used and side effects.

√	Medication Use / Category	Purpose	Common Side Effects	Symptoms of Serious Side Effects* CONTACT NURSE IMMEDIATELY
	Stimulates Contractions oxytocin (Pitocin)	Helps start and continue labor and controls serious bleeding	Cramping	Severe allergic reactions, severe headache, lightheadedness, or sudden and severe uterine pain, nausea, or vomiting
	Prostaglandins dinoprostone (Prostin or Cervidil) misoprostol (Cytotec)	Prepares cervix for labor and delivery	Diarrhea, stomach pain, vomiting, nausea, fever, headache	Severe allergic reactions, extreme stomach pain/cramping, dizziness/fainting
	Control Bleeding carboprost (Hemabate) misoprostol (Cytotec) methylergonovine (Methergine)	Helps control serious bleeding	Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, uterine cramping, hot flashes, flushing (red face or skin color), dizziness, increased heart rate, blurred vision, dry mouth	Severe uterine cramping
	Pain Relief oxycodone & acetaminophen (Percocet), hydrocodone & acetaminophen (Lortab or Norco), hydromorphone (Dilaudid), morphine, fentanyl	Relieves moderate to severe pain	Constipation, dizziness, drowsiness, nausea, vomiting, or headache	Severe allergic reactions (skin rash; itching and/or hives; swelling of the face, lips, or tongue; difficulty breathing), or extreme sleepiness
	Pain Medication with Antidote Action nalbuphine (Nubain)	Relieves pain and reduces itching of other pain medications	Drowsiness, sweating, dizziness, nausea, or dry mouth	Severe allergic reactions
	Anti-Inflammatory naproxen (Anaprox), ibuprofen (Motrin), ketorolac (Toradol)	Relieves mild to moderate pain and cramping, reduces inflammation	Stomach upset, constipation or diarrhea, dizziness, gas, or heartburn	Severe allergic reactions or severe stomach pain
	Antibiotics penicillin, gentamicin, erythromycin, ampicillin (Omnipen), ampicillin/sulbactam (Unasyn), cefazolin (Ancef or Kefzol), clindamycin (Cleocin), ceftriaxone (Rocephin), nitrofurantoin (Macrobid)	Prevent/treat bacterial infections in mom and baby	Diarrhea, nausea, stomach upset, headache, metallic taste (Cleocin), or body ache (Cleocin)	Severe allergic reactions, severe diarrhea, hearing changes (gentamicin), or significant decrease in urine output (gentamicin)
	Nausea Relief ondansetron (Zofran) metoclopramide (Reglan) promethazine (Phenergan)	Relieves nausea; reduces anxiety; helps relieve pain	Headache, drowsiness (Phenergan), dizziness, confusion, or dry eyes / dry mouth (Phenergan)	Severe allergic reactions, excessive drowsiness (Phenergan), or pain in hands/fingers (Phenergan)
	Itching Relief diphenhydramine (Benadryl)	Relieves itching	Drowsiness, dizziness, dry mouth, or dry eyes	Severe allergic reactions, increased heart rate, or inability to urinate

* This list includes the most common side effects only. Other serious side effects may occur. For concerns or symptoms not listed here, please talk to your nurse immediately or contact your local pharmacist. If serious side effects occur after your hospital stay, please contact your doctor immediately.

√	Medication Use / Category	Purpose	Common Side Effects	Symptoms of Serious Side Effects* CONTACT NURSE IMMEDIATELY
	Relax Uterus / Slow Contractions terbutaline (Brethine) indomethacin (Indocin) nifedipine (Procardia)	Stops labor or slows contractions	Headache, dizziness, flushing (Procardia), nausea, vomiting, anxiety, increased heart rate (Brethine), abdominal pain, stomach upset, constipation	Severe allergic reactions, difficulty breathing, chest pain, swelling of extremities, muscle cramps (Brethine)
	Steroids betamethasone (Celestone) dexamethasone	Helps develop baby's lungs before 34 weeks gestation	Headache, insomnia, dizziness, nervousness, or increased blood sugar	Severe allergic reactions
	Sleeping Aid zolpidem (Ambien)	Helps sleep begin and continue	Dizziness, headache, or lightheadedness	Severe allergic reactions, hallucinations, or confusion
	Bowel Care docusate (Colace) bisacodyl (Dulcolax) senna/docusate (Senna -S)	Relieves constipation	Abdominal cramping or diarrhea	Severe allergic reactions or severe diarrhea
	Supplements prenatal vitamin, iron, folic acid	Replaces vitamins and minerals in your body	Stomach upset, intestinal irritation (iron), dark stools (iron), constipation, urine discoloration (iron)	Severe stomach upset (iron)
	Reverses Sedation naloxone (Narcan)	Relieves complications from narcotic pain medications	Return of pain that was previously being helped by pain medications	Severe allergic reactions
	Seizure Control magnesium sulfate	Prevents seizures	Flushing (red face or skin color), diarrhea, fatigue, low blood pressure	Severe allergic reactions, weakness, slurred speech, nausea and vomiting, fatigue, or difficulty breathing
	Preterm Labor magnesium sulfate	Protects extremely preterm baby's brain and blood vessels	Flushing (red face or skin color), diarrhea, fatigue, low blood pressure	Severe allergic reactions, weakness, slurred speech, nausea and vomiting, fatigue, or difficulty breathing
	High Blood Pressure Control nifedipine (Procardia) labetolol (Trandate) Hydralazine (Apresoline)	Lowers blood pressure	Flushing (red face or skin color), headache, nausea, dizziness, lightheadedness	Severe allergic reactions, severe chest pain, breathing problems, fast heart beat
	Low Blood Pressure Control ephedrine	Increases blood pressure	increased heart rate, shakiness, headache, dizziness	High blood pressure, chest pain, breathing problems
	Baby Medications vitamin K injection erythromycin eye ointment Hepatitis B vaccination	Vitamin K helps blood clotting and erythromycin reduces eye infections in newborns. These meds are required by the health department in most states; however, a parent can request that their baby not received these medications. See Hepatitis B vaccine information sheet	Side effects for one time dosed medications are limited and often difficult to detect in a newborn baby	Severe allergic reactions

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