

It's recommended that older adults avoid the use of anticholinergic medications to prevent dangerous side effects. While it is not recommended, you may still be taking one or more of these medications.

What are anticholinergic medications?

Anticholinergic medications block a chemical in your nervous system that can be potentially dangerous when used in older adults to treat conditions like:

- Allergies
- Mental Health
- Anxiety
- Nausea
- Urinary incontinence
- Parkinson's disease
- Muscle pain/spasms
- Diarrhea

Potential Side Effects:



- Dry mouth
- Blurry vision
- Constipation
- Trouble urinating
- Drowsiness or sedation
- Confusion
- Memory problems

Taking 2 or More of These Meds can Cause:

- Falls & fractures
- Emergency room and hospital visits
- Delirium
- Impaired cognitive function
- Increased risk of death



Each day in the U.S., 750 seniors are **hospitalized** due to **serious side effects** from medications.

What can you do to lower your risk of side effects?



Talk with your doctor or pharmacist to learn which anticholinergic medications may be appropriate to stop or switch to a safer alternative.



Use the table below to create a medication action plan while talking with your doctor or pharmacist.

Medication Name	What we talked about:	What you should do:

References

- 2023 American Geriatrics Society Beers Criteria® for potentially inappropriate medication use in older adults.
- CMS Standardized Format for the Comprehensive Medication Review Action Plan and Summary Request for Co | CMS. (2025). Cms.gov.
- Ghossein, N., Kang, M., & Lakhkar, A. D. (2023). Anticholinergic medications. PubMed; StatPearls Publishing.
- Lown Institute. (2019). Medication overload and older Americans.