

Did you know that individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities experience seizures at greater rates than population averages?

Did you know that individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities experience seizures at greater rates than population averages? It is important for Support Professionals to be familiar with side effects of anticonvulsants – the common medications taken to prevent seizures. This class of medications is marked by a large number of side effects that may affect the body at-large (systemic effects) or primarily the brain and nervous system (neurologic effects) that are important for any caretaker in any setting to be familiar with.

Drug	Systemic side effects	Neurologic side effects
Carbamazepine	Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, low sodium level, rash, itching	Drowsiness, dizziness, blurred or double vision, lethargy, headache
Cenobamate	Fatigue	Drowsiness, dizziness, headache, double vision (diplopia)
Clobazam	Increased salivation, nausea, vomiting, constipation	Drowsiness, aggression, irritability, inability to coordinate voluntary muscular movements (ataxia), insomnia
Eslicarbazepine	Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, fatigue, low sodium level, rash	Dizziness, drowsiness, headache, double vision (diplopia), vertigo, inability to coordinate voluntary muscular movements (ataxia), attention disturbance, blurred vision, tremor <i>(Note: Dizziness, diplopia, and ataxia reported more frequently in combination with carbamazepine)</i>
Ethosuximide	Nausea, vomiting	Sleep disturbance, drowsiness, hyperactivity
Felbamate	Nausea, vomiting, anorexia, weight loss	Insomnia, dizziness, headache, inability to coordinate voluntary muscular movements (ataxia)
Gabapentin	Fatigue, sleep for an unusual amount of time	Drowsiness, dizziness, inability to coordinate voluntary muscular movements (ataxia), double vision
Lacosamide	Nausea, vomiting, fatigue	Inability to coordinate voluntary muscular movements (ataxia), dizziness, headache, double vision (diplopia)
Lamotrigine	Rash, nausea	Dizziness, tremor, double vision (diplopia)
Levetiracetam	Fatigue, infection	Drowsiness, dizziness, agitation, anxiety, irritability, depression
Oxcarbazepine	Nausea, rash, low sodium level	Sedation, headache, dizziness, vertigo, inability to coordinate voluntary muscular movements (ataxia), double vision (diplopia)

Antiepileptic Drugs

Drug	Systemic side effects	Neurologic side effects
Phenobarbital	Nausea, rash	Alteration of sleep cycles, sedation, lethargy, behavioral changes, hyperactivity, inability to coordinate voluntary muscular movements (ataxia), tolerance, dependence
Phenytoin	Enlarged gums, rash	Confusion, slurred speech, double vision (diplopia), inability to coordinate voluntary muscular movements (ataxia)
Pregabalin	Weight gain, peripheral edema, dry mouth	Dizziness, drowsiness, inability to coordinate voluntary muscular movements (ataxia), tremor
Primidone	Nausea, rash	Alteration of sleep cycles, sedation, lethargy, behavioral changes, hyperactivity, inability to coordinate voluntary muscular movements (ataxia), tolerance, dependence
Tiagabine	Abdominal pain, nausea, lack of energy	Dizziness, drowsiness, nervousness, tremor, difficulty concentrating
Topiramate	Weight loss, tingling sensation, fatigue	Nervousness, difficulty concentrating, confusion, depression, anorexia, language problems, anxiety, mood problems, tremor
Valproate	Weight gain, nausea, vomiting, hair loss, easy bruising	Tremor, dizziness
Vigabatrin	Vision loss, fatigue	Drowsiness, dizziness
Zonisamide	Nausea, anorexia	Drowsiness, dizziness, inability to coordinate voluntary muscular movements (ataxia), confusion, difficulty concentrating, depression

This document presents an abridged review of side effects for your convenience, and is not an exhaustive resource. Please present any potential resident health concerns to their healthcare provider(s) immediately.