

Medications

This section focuses on information you need to know about medications you may take while in the hospital or after your discharge.

After a spinal cord injury, medications are given to decrease your chances of getting a urinary tract infection, decrease your chances of developing blood clots, help you better manage your bowel and bladder programs, decrease spasticity, and help fight any infections you might develop. At first you may also need medications for pain, sleep, stomach disturbances, and anxiety.

Get to know your medications and why you're taking them. Find out the proper dosage, how the medication works and how it should be stored. It is important to learn the side effects of medicines and special precautions, such as whether they need to be taken with food or milk. If you have an unusual reaction be sure to report it to your doctor. Only take medicines prescribed for you and finish the course of treatment prescribed. Remember to check with your doctor or pharmacist for possible drug interactions even with over-the-counter (OTC) drugs.

As you get older you may need to see a specialist for various problems like high blood pressure, fluid retention, heart or stomach problems, or arthritis. Be sure to tell the specialist the medications you are already on for your spinal cord injury. Sometimes medicines may work against other medicines the specialist orders or don't work well together. Also, as you get older your liver and kidneys may not process the medication as well as it did before. Medicines may stay in your system longer and may even build up to the point of making you sick. For example, some medicines in a young person will stay in their body for 24 hours, but for someone over 60 it may take more than 72 hours to be flushed out of their system. You may need to take some medications less frequently and in lower doses.

Know both the brand name and the generic name (usually a long chemical sounding name) of medicines you are taking. Sometimes pharmacies will give you a different brand but if you know the generic name you can be sure it is the same medication. Read the label on the medicine bottle and follow the instructions. Always check your labels for warnings. For example, sometimes medicines can not be taken with alcohol. Other times the alcohol will increase the effect of the medicine prescribed for you and may make you very drowsy. And in other circumstances medicines are given to treat alcoholism and if you are given a medicine with some alcohol content you may become sick with nausea, vomiting, blurred vision, dizziness, headache, palpitations, confusion, or shortness of breath.

Never take someone else's medication. Medicines are prescribed for a particular reason and situation. Again, become familiar with your medications. Keep a list of the medicines (prescription and over the counter) and dosages you take. Take this list with you whenever you are going to see a doctor. Be sure to tell your doctor and other health care professionals about any unusual reactions you have to a medicine (rash, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, shortness of breath).

It is best to go to the same pharmacy, if possible, because they will have a record of all the medicines you are taking and the possible interactions that can occur. You will want to tell the pharmacist about any over-the-counter medicines you are taking.

Follow your pharmacist's recommendations for storing your medicines. Sometimes medicines need to be refrigerated (like some liquid antibiotics or suppositories) but most medicines can be stored at room temperature. Sometimes they need to be kept out of direct sunlight. Keep them in their original containers and keep them out of reach of children.

If you are pregnant or considering getting pregnant, talk to your doctor about the medicines you are taking. Some medicines are harmful to the developing baby. Your doctor may recommend that you stop taking the medicine during your pregnancy or he may choose a medicine that will not harm the baby. Most medicines a mother takes are passed through her breast milk. If you decide to breast feed your baby you will also want to check with your doctor about the safety of your medicines for your baby.

The rest of this chapter is divided according to medications you might use for your bladder, bowel, spasms, and other miscellaneous problems. This section is in a chart format to make it easier for you to find medications you might be taking.

Please note: Your pharmacist can give you more information about any medication your doctor prescribes. Also, dosages listed on the pages below are the most common dose; however, your doctor will prescribe the dose that is right for you. The side effects listed may or may not occur. If you experience any side effects, let your doctor know.

Bladder Medications

Medication	Actions & Use	Dosage	Side Effects	Precautions
Bactrim (Sulfamethoxazole-trimethoprim)	An antibiotic that eliminates bacteria causing infections. A low dose may also be used over 3 - 6 months to treat chronic bladder infections.	Usually 1"DS" (double strength) tablet every 12 hours; your doctor will give you specific instructions. Make sure you take all of the medicine even if you feel better.	Skin rash, fever, nausea, vomiting or diarrhea, sore throat, mouth sores, headache, dizziness, photosensitivity.	Given with caution if you have impaired kidney or liver function. Drink at least eight 8 ounce glasses of fluids. Take a missed dose as soon as you remember. If your stomach becomes upset, take it after a meal or with a snack. Don't use with Ascorbic acid - it may cause precipitation. May increase bleeding time with Coumadin.

<p>Ditropan (Oxybutynin chloride)</p>	<p>Delays the initial desire to empty bladder, aids in preventing wetness between catheterizations, increases bladder capacity.</p>	<p>Usually start with 5 mgs. three times a day.</p>	<p>Can cause: drowsiness, dizziness, insomnia (inability to sleep), palpitations (heart flutter), tachycardia (fast pulse), blurred vision, dry mouth, nausea, vomiting, constipation, impotence, urinary hesitance & retention, rash, decreased sweating.</p>	<p>Bladder cystometry before and during therapy to evaluate effectiveness of medicine. Be alert to heat stroke symptoms because it decreases sweating.</p>
<p>Macrodantin (Nitrofurantoin)</p>	<p>An anti-infective; eliminates or suppresses germs causing certain bladder & kidney infections.</p>	<p>Adults: 50 - 100 mg three to four times per day with milk or meals. If given to prevent bladder infections- 50 - 100 mg daily at bedtime.</p>	<p>Upset stomach, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, skin rash, brown colored urine (harmless), headache, chills or fever.</p>	<p>Take with food or milk to decrease upset stomach. May develop hypersensitivity after long term drug therapy. Drink at least eight 8 ounce glasses of water or other liquids everyday.</p>
<p>MandelamineMandelamine (methenamine mandelate) MandelamineHiprex (methenamine hippurate)</p>	<p>An anti-bacterial: eliminates or suppresses germs causing certain bladder & kidney infections.</p>	<p>Adults: 1 gram every 12 hours</p>	<p>Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, skin rashes.</p>	<p>If you forget, take the missed dose as soon as you remember; take any remaining doses for that day at evenly spaced times. Over the counter medications, i.e. antacids, may interfere with the way</p>

				Mandelamine works in your body; do not take other medications unless your doctor or pharmacist knows you are taking Mandelamine *
Tofranil (imipramine hydrochloride)	> Antidepressant with a side effect of urine retention so, it is used for patients who are getting wet between catheters	As physician prescribes	Drowsiness, dizziness, low blood pressure, dry mouth, constipation, photosensitivity	Do not withdraw drug abruptly, Avoid alcohol, Use sunblock
Vitamin C (Ascorbic Acid)	A vitamin used to help prevent urinary tract infections. Also helps heal tissues.	Usually 1000 mg two times per day	Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, epigastric burning.	Large amounts may affect urine tests for sugar in diabetics. Can decrease the anti-coagulant effect of coumadin. Take a missed or forgotten dose as soon as you remember it and the remaining doses for that day at evenly spaced intervals.

* Do not allow anyone else to take this medication; keep in touch with your doctor while taking this drug; take this drug with meals or a snack to decrease stomach upset; drink at least eight 8 ounce glasses of water or other liquids every day. Need to drink cranberry, plum, or prune juices or take Vitamin C when taking Mandelamine to increase the acidity of your urine.

Bowel Medications

Medication	Action & Use	Average dose	Side Effects	Precautions
Colace (Docusate sodium)	A stool softener; makes it easier to pass your stool.	100 mg two times a day	Mild stomach cramps, diarrhea or loose stools.	If you should forget a dose, take the missed dose as soon as possible. Do not take 2 doses at one time.
Dulcolax tablets (bisacodyl) Dulcolax suppository	Tablets: 10 mg given 6 to 12 hours before bowel program. Suppository: One suppository at the time a bowel movement is desired (refer to bowel info)	A laxative that stimulates contractions of the colon and increases fluid accumulation in the small intestine and colon.	Nausea, vomiting, abdominal cramps.	Be sure to follow your bowel program.
Metamucil (Psyllium)	Used to treat constipation and other bowel problems. Works by increasing the bulk and moisture content of the stool. This stimulates the bowel to pass the stool.	1 to 2 rounded teaspoons in eight ounces of juice or water daily.	Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal cramps.	Be sure to mix powder with at least eight ounces of water or fruit juice. Must drink right away after mixing or it will congeal. Drink plenty of fluids throughout the day. Do not take more than 3 times a day. If you miss a dose, take it as soon as you remember unless it is close to the time of your next regular dose, in which case take only the regular dose. Diabetic patients should use a brand that does not contain sugar.

Pericolace (Dogusate sodium & casanthranol)	Helps keep the stool soft for easier passage. Provides gentle stimulation.	1 tab 2 -3 times a day	Nausea, abdominal cramping, diarrhea, rash	If a dose is missed, take as soon as you remember. Do not take 2 doses at one time.
Senekot (Senna)	Stimulates peristalsis directly on the colon and increases fluid in the small intestine and the colon.	Usually 1 - 4 tablets as needed 8 - 10 hours before your suppository; however, follow the recommended bowel regimen that worked best for you.	Virtually free from side effects; however, abdominal cramping or loose stools may occur.	Be sure to follow your bowel program. Do not give if you suspect bowel obstruction.
For severe constipation:				
Lactulose Milk of magnesia (M.O.M.) Mineral oil	Lactulose- increases water in the colon- resulting distension promotes peristalsis M.O.M.- a saline laxative that works by drawing water into the intestine Mineral oil- a lubricant laxative that increases water in the stool and prevents colonic reabsorption of fecal water	Mix together 2 teaspoons of Lactulose, 2 tablespoons of M.O.M., and 2 tablespoons of Mineral oil. Take this mixture three to four times a day until you have results. Note: this is for short term use!	Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal cramps	Do not take if you suspect bowel obstruction or appendicitis.

Bowel Medications

Medication	Action & Use	Average Dose	Side Effects	Precautions
Dantrium (Dantrolene sodium)	Works directly on skeletal muscles and is used to treat certain types of spasticity or muscle spasms. May take up to 1 week to have effect.	25 mg two to three times a day	Muscle weakness, drowsiness, dizziness, slurred speech, drooling, diarrhea, nausea, loss of appetite, abdominal cramps, constipation,	Tell you doctor if you have a history of liver or lung disease, or any heart condition. Use sunblock while on this medication. It may affect your skin's

			itching, darkened urine.	sensitivity to the sun. Wear protective clothing and sunglasses. Take with food or milk to prevent upset stomach. Do not drink alcohol with this medication.
Lioresal (Baclofen)	A muscle relaxant, antispastic - useful in reducing the signs & symptoms of spasticity.	10 - 40 - mg 3 - 4 times a day. Baclofen Pump (a treatment for severe spasticity - medicine is delivered by an implantable, programmable pump into the space around the spinal cord -average maintenance dose 12 mcg-800 mcg per day)	The most common is drowsiness followed by dizziness, weakness, fatigue, nasal stuffiness, & rash.	Take at evenly spaced intervals, do not mix with alcohol, be aware of decreased alertness, do not stop abruptly. Pump -requires careful screening and follow-up.
Valium (Diazepam)	A tranquilizer that produces a calming effect, useful in treating anxiety also used to relieve muscle spasms.	2 - 10 mg 2 -3 times a day	Drowsiness & fatigue commonly occur when first starting on this drug; if fatigue persists, call your doctor.	Do not drink alcoholic beverages; do not allow anyone else to take this medication; do not take non-prescription drugs, such as cold remedies & sleeping aids without notifying your doctor; do not take a missed dose when you remember it; omit forgotten dose. Possibility of abuse or addiction exists. Do not stop abruptly.

Pain Medication

Medication	Action & Use	Average Dose	Side Effects	Precautions
Elavil (Amitriptyline hydrochloride)	An antidepressant that also works to help relieve neurogenic pain	25 mg to 150 mg at bedtime daily	Drowsiness, dizziness, weakness, headache, orthostatic hypotension, dry mouth, rash	Do not stop medicine abruptly. Avoid alcohol while on this medicine. Consult doctor before taking prescription or OTC medicines.
Relafen (Nabumetone)	Nonsteroidal, anti-inflammatory	500 mg to 1000 mg two times a day	Dizziness, headache, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, rash	Take with food, milk or antacids. If any signs of gastrointestinal bleeding (vomiting-coffee ground color or back tarry stools) contact doctor immediately. If on long term- monitor liver and renal function.
Tylenol (Acetaminophen)	Relieves pain and reduces fever.	325 mg - 1000 mg every 4 - 6 hours	Usually none when taken for short periods of time; occasionally, some people become allergic to Tylenol or develop a low blood sugar or liver problem.	Do not take for more than 10 days; call your doctor if symptoms persist; take the missed dose as soon as you remember and take next dose 4 hours later.

Antibiotics

Medication	Action & Use	Average Dose	Side Effects	Precautions
Amoxicillin	An antibiotic, a drug that eliminates many different bacteria which cause infections. Most commonly used for urinary tract or respiratory infections.	250 - 500 mg every 8 hours	Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, rash	Give with food to prevent upset stomach. Take all of medicine as prescribed.
Cipro	An antibiotic, used for many	500 mg twice a	Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, rash	Use with extreme caution with Theophylline. Drink

(Ciprofloxacin)	different type infections like bladder, skin, respiratory, etc.	day		plenty of fluids.
Keflex (Cephalexin hydrochloride)	An antibiotic; eliminates certain bacteria which cause infections including respiratory, urinary & skin infections.	250 - 500 mg four times per day	Allergic reaction including skin rash, shortness of breath, itching & hives; if any of these symptoms occur, notify your doctor; upset stomach may occur; if so, try taking with a light snack or some crackers; diarrhea may also occur.	Be sure to take all doses as prescribed by your doctor. Even after you feel your infection is over symptoms of the infection can recur if drug therapy is not followed through to the last dose; if you forget or miss a dose, take it as soon as you remember it; take the remaining doses for that day at evenly spaced intervals.
Norfloxacin (Noroxin)	Bactericidal usually used for urinary tract infection.	400 mg two times a day	Dizziness, Nausea, Dry mouth, rash, photosensitivity	Drink plenty of fluids. Take 1 - 2 hours after meals because food, antacids, and iron interfere with absorption.

Other Medications

Medication	Action & Use	Average Dose	Side Effects	Precautions
Ferrous Sulfate	Provides the body with extra amounts of iron needed to produce red blood cells; also used to treat or prevent iron deficiency anemia that occurs when the body has fewer red blood cells than needed because of poor diet, excess bleeding, or other medical problems.	325 mg two to three times a day.	Stomach upset, constipation, dark or black stools (harmless), darkening of children's teeth (liquid)	Should be taken on empty stomach but if stomach upset occurs take with meals or snack. If constipation occurs drink extra fluids and add bran foods and prunes to your diet. Antacids and tetracycline may affect your body's response to this drug. If you forget or miss a dose, take it as soon as you remember; if remembered at the time of the next dose, take only the regularly scheduled

				dose; do not take a double dose; do not allow anyone else to take this medicine.
Multivitamins	Contained in the food we eat. However, there are times our bodies need more than the usual amount; prescribed when a patient needs extra vitamins and due to medical reason, cannot receive full benefit from vitamins contained in foods.	1 tablet every day. Comes in tablet, capsule and liquid forms.	May cause slight nausea and an unpleasant taste in the mouth; to eliminate these, take with food or after eating with a glass of water.	If you forget a dose, take it when you remember; you do not have to take a double dose to make up for any you may not have taken.
Pro-Banthine (propantheline bromide)	Normally this drug is used to help treat peptic ulcer but in a spinal cord injury this drug is used to decrease sweating by blocking a certain chemical needed to produce sweat. Without this chemical, the sweat glands will not produce sweat. It can also be used to keep you dry between cathing as it caused retention of urine.	15 mg three times a day	Dizziness, nervousness, drowsiness, difficulty in sleeping, blurred vision, difficulty in urinating, nausea, constipation, difficulty in breathing.	Do not take if you have glaucoma, prostate trouble, ulcerative colitis, or difficulty passing urine, notify your doctor if you notice any change in your heart rate. This drug increases risk of heat stroke; try to avoid being outside on a hot day as much as possible; avoid unusually warm places, i.e. steam rooms & saunas; keep in touch with your doctor; do not allow anyone else to take this medicine
Reglan (metoclopramide hydrochloride)	prevention or reduction of nausea and vomiting, increases gastrointestinal movement.	10 mg, 30 minutes before meals and at bedtime.	>Restlessness, anxiety, drowsiness, fatigue, rash.	Restlessness, anxiety, drowsiness, fatigue, rash
Zantac (Ranitidine hydrochloride)	Decreases gastric acid secretion. Used for duodenal or gastric ulcer and gastroesophageal reflux disease.	150 mg tablet one-two times a day	Headache, rash, dizziness, elevated liver enzymes.	Use cautiously with impaired liver and kidney function. Stop smoking

			Avoid taking with alcohol as it increases drowsiness.	because it can increase gastric secretion
Prilosec (Omeprazole)	Decreases gastric acid secretion. Used for duodenal ulcer, esophagitis, and gastroesophageal reflux disease.	60 mg every day	nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, flatulence, abdominal pain, headache, dizziness	Take capsule whole, do not open or crush
Propulsid (Cisapride)	Increases gastrointestinal movement.	10 mg tablet with meals and at bedtime	headache, diarrhea, abdominal pain	Do not use if suspect bowel obstruction. Excreted in breast milk so use cautiously if breast feeding.
Nifedipine (Procardia)	Usually used for angina and hypertension however, because of its antihypertensive effect it can be used for Autonomic Hyperreflexia	As prescribed by physician	dizziness, flushing, headache	Monitor blood pressure