

Rich Weil of FitsMeHealth (Rich@fitsmehealth.com):

Below are the common, less common, and possible rare side effects of the top 12 medications used OTC and/or prescribed in the United States. For the life of me I cannot remember even one article on CNN, MSNBC, NYT, or other mass media where they sensationalized the side effects of these commonly prescribed meds (with the possible exception of hydrocodone). My absolute favorite was on CNN Health: “They took blockbuster drugs for weight loss and diabetes. Now their stomachs are paralyzed.” For some people, they must take these common meds for the rest of their lives. As I’ve mentioned before, the bias against weight loss meds comes from an extremely insidious and egregious, internalized bias against people with obesity. People think about people with obesity, “Why do they need meds to lose weight? Just eat less, exercise more, exert willpower and self-discipline, and put the fork down.”

PREDNISON

- aggression
- agitation
- blurred vision
- decrease in the amount of urine
- dizziness
- fast, slow, pounding, or irregular heartbeat or pulse
- headache
- irritability
- mood changes
- noisy, rattling breathing
- numbness or tingling in the arms or legs
- pounding in the ears
- shortness of breath
- swelling of the fingers, hands, feet, or lower legs
- trouble thinking, speaking, or walking
- troubled breathing at rest
- weight gain
- abdominal or stomach cramping or burning (severe)
- abdominal or stomach pain
- backache
- bloody, black, or tarry stools
- cough or hoarseness
- darkening of the skin
- decrease in height
- decreased vision
- diarrhea
- dry mouth
- eye pain
- eye tearing
- facial hair growth in females
- fainting

- fever or chills
- flushed, dry skin
- fractures
- fruit-like breath odor
- full or round face, neck, or trunk
- heartburn or indigestion (severe and continuous)
- increased hunger
- increased thirst
- increased urination
- loss of appetite
- loss of sexual desire or ability
- lower back or side pain
- menstrual irregularities
- muscle pain or tenderness
- muscle wasting or weakness
- nausea
- pain in the back, ribs, arms, or legs
- painful or difficult urination
- skin rash
- sweating
- trouble healing
- trouble sleeping
- unexplained weight loss
- unusual tiredness or weakness
- vision changes
- vomiting
- vomiting of material that looks like coffee grounds
- abnormal fat deposits on the face, neck, and trunk
- acne
- dry scalp
- lightening of normal skin color
- red face
- reddish purple lines on the arms, face, legs, trunk, or groin
- swelling of the stomach area
- thinning of the scalp hair

METFORMIN

- **More common**
- Abdominal or stomach discomfort
- cough or hoarseness
- decreased appetite
- diarrhea
- fast or shallow breathing
- fever or chills
- general feeling of discomfort

- lower back or side pain
- muscle pain or cramping
- painful or difficult urination
- sleepiness
- **Less common**
- Anxiety
- blurred vision
- chest discomfort
- cold sweats
- coma
- confusion
- cool, pale skin
- depression
- difficult or labored breathing
- dizziness
- fast, irregular, pounding, or racing heartbeat or pulse
- feeling of warmth
- headache
- increased hunger
- increased sweating
- nausea
- nervousness
- nightmares
- redness of the face, neck, arms, and occasionally, upper chest
- seizures
- shakiness
- slurred speech
- tightness in the chest
- unusual tiredness or weakness
- Rare
- Behavior change similar to being drunk
- difficulty with concentrating
- drowsiness
- lack or loss of strength
- restless sleep
- unusual sleepiness

ASPIRIN

- Abdominal or stomach pain, cramping, or
- burning
- black, tarry stools
- bloody or cloudy urine
- change in consciousness
- chest pain or discomfort
- confusion

- constipation
- convulsions, severe or continuing
- dark urine
- decreased frequency or amount of urine
- diarrhea
- difficult breathing
- drowsiness
- fainting
- fast breathing
- feeling that something terrible will happen
- fever
- general tiredness and weakness
- greatly decreased frequency of urination or amount of urine
- headache
- heartburn
- increased thirst
- indigestion
- irregular heartbeat
- light-colored stools
- loss of appetite
- loss of consciousness
- lower back or side pain
- muscle cramping and weakness
- muscle tremors
- nausea or vomiting
- nervousness
- numbness or tingling in the hands, feet, or lips
- panic
- rapid, deep breathing
- restlessness
- seizures
- skin rash
- stomach cramps
- swelling of the face, fingers, or lower legs
- unusual bleeding or bruising
- unusual tiredness or weakness
- upper right abdominal or stomach
- vomiting of blood or material that looks like coffee grounds
- weakness or heaviness of the legs
- weight gain
- yellow eyes and skin

PROZAC

- feeling sick or being sick
- having seizures (fits)

- an irregular heartbeat or a heart attack
- breathing difficulties
- a change in the way you feel, ranging from
- agitation to falling into a coma
- serotonin syndrome:
- high fever, agitation, confusion, trembling,
- shivering and excessive sweating or weird
- movements of your muscles
- tiredness, confusion, headache, irritability,
- feeling or being sick (nausea and vomiting),
- and muscle twitching, rashes; blotches;
- itching; blistering; redness; peeling; or ulcers
- on your skin, in your mouth, or in your
- genital area.
- a rare but serious skin reaction, difficulty
- breathing, swelling of your face or throat,
- and itching skin lumps.
- symptoms of an allergic reaction
- having seizures (fits)
- feeling very excited or 'high'
- behavior changes because you feel irritated
- or agitated
- an erection that is painful and lasts for a long
- time (priapism)

LISINAPRIL

- A dry, tickly cough that does not get better
- Feeling dizzy or lightheaded, especially when you stand up or sit up quickly
- Headaches
- vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Itching or a mild skin rash
- Blurred vision
- Anaphylaxis
- Kidney damage
- lips, mouth, throat or tongue suddenly become swollen
- breathing very fast or struggling to breathe
- very wheezy
- feel like you're choking or gasping for air
- throat feels tight or you're struggling to swallow
- skin, tongue or lips turn blue, grey or pale
- sudden and very confused, drowsy or dizzy
- fainting and cannot be woken up
- a child is limp, floppy or not

- responding like they normally do (their head may fall to the side, backwards or forwards, or they may find it difficult to lift their head or

focus on your face)

- a rash that's swollen, raised, itchy, blistered or peeling.
- weakness on one side of your body,
- trouble speaking or thinking, loss of balance or blurred eyesight
- faster heart rate, chest pain and tightness in your chest
- shortness of breath, wheezing and tightening of the chest –lung problems

LEVOTHYROXINE

- increased appetite
- weight loss
- heat sensitivity
- excessive sweating
- headache
- hyperactivity
- nervousness
- anxiety
- irritability
- mood swings
- trouble sleeping
- tiredness
- tremors
- muscle weakness
- changes in menstrual periods
- hair loss (usually temporary)
- diarrhea
- vomiting
- stomach cramps
- increased appetite
- weight loss
- heat sensitivity
- excessive sweating
- headache
- hyperactivity
- nervousness
- anxiety
- irritability
- mood swings
- trouble sleeping
- tiredness
- tremors
- muscle weakness
- changes in menstrual periods
- hair loss (usually temporary)

- diarrhea
- vomiting
- stomach cramps
- Feeling sick (nausea) or indigestion
- Headaches
- Nosebleeds
- Sore throat

LIPITOR

- Cold-like symptoms, such as a runny nose, blocked nose or sneezing
- Constipation or flatulence
- Diarrhea
- increased appetite
- weight loss
- rhabdomyolysis
- heat sensitivity
- excessive sweating
- headache
- hyperactivity
- nervousness
- anxiety
- irritability
- mood swings
- trouble sleeping
- tiredness
- tremors
- muscle weakness
- changes in menstrual periods
- hair loss (usually temporary)
- diarrhea
- vomiting
- stomach cramps
- Liver:
- loss of appetite
- upper stomach pain
- dark urine
- yellowing of your skin or the whites of your eyes
- allergic reaction

ZOCOR

- loss of appetite,
- upper-right side stomach pain,
- tiredness,
- itching,
- dark urine,
- clay-colored stool, and

- yellowing of the skin or eyes
- heartburn,
- gas,
- bloating,
- stomach pain,
- indigestion,
- nausea,
- constipation,
- diarrhea,
- headache,
- joint pain,
- muscle pain,
- skin rash,
- tiredness
- weakness
- loss of appetite
- upper stomach pain
- dark urine
- jaundice, yellowing of your skin or the whites of your eyes
- confusion
- fever
- painful urination
- weight gain
- atrial fibrillation
- sudden vision loss, blurred vision, tunnel vision, eye pain or swelling, or seeing halos around lights;
- Serious heart symptoms such as fast, irregular, or pounding heartbeats; fluttering in your chest; shortness of breath; and sudden dizziness, lightheadedness, or passing out;
- Severe headache, confusion, slurred speech, arm or leg weakness, trouble walking, loss of coordination, feeling unsteady, very stiff muscles, high fever, profuse sweating, or tremors.

PRILOSEC

- headache
- abdominal pain
- diarrhea
- nausea
- vomiting
- gas (flatulence)
- dizziness
- upper respiratory infection
- acid reflux
- constipation
- rash
- cough

- bone fracture (osteoporosis related)
- deficiency of granulocytes in the blood
- loss of appetite
- gastric polyps
- hip fracture
- hair loss
- chronic inflammation of the stomach
- destruction of skeletal muscle
- taste changes
- abnormal dreams
- liver damage
- inflammation within the kidneys
- pancreatitis
- dermatologic disorder, potentially life threatening (toxic epidermal necrolysis)
- post marketing: bone fracture

NORVASC

- Swelling (edema)
- Excess fluid in the lungs (pulmonary edema)
- Headache
- Fatigue
- Palpitations
- Dizziness
- Nausea
- Flushing
- Abdominal pain
- Sleepiness
- Male sexual disorder
- Drowsiness
- Itching
- Skin rash
- Muscle cramps
- Extrapyrarnidal disorder: (muscle

spasms, restlessness, muscle rigidity, slow movement, [tremor](#), and jerky movements)

ACETAMINOPHEN-HYDROCODONE

- Severe allergic reactions including a severe, potentially life-threatening allergic reaction. The reaction can occur very quickly. Symptoms may include:
 - trouble breathing
 - swelling of your face, throat, and mouth
 - rash
 - itching
 - vomiting
 - Adrenal gland problems:

- nausea
- vomiting
- loss of appetite
- [tiredness](#)
- weakness
- dizziness
- lightheadedness

ALBUTEROL

- nervousness or trembling/shakiness in legs, arms, hands, or feet
- headache
- throat or nasal irritation
- muscle aches
- tachycardia
- palpitations
- bladder pain
- bloody or cloudy urine
- chest discomfort, tightness, or pain
- chills
- cough
- cough producing mucus
- diarrhea
- difficult or labored breathing
- difficulty with swallowing
- dizziness
- feeling of warmth
- fever
- frequent urge to urinate
- hives, itching, or skin rash
- hoarseness
- loss of appetite
- lower back or side pain
- nausea
- puffiness or swelling of the eyelids or around the eyes, face, lips, or tongue
- redness of the face, neck, arms, and occasionally, upper chest
- runny nose
- sore throat
- stomach pain
- swollen, painful, or tender lymph glands in the neck, armpit, or groin
- unusual tiredness or weakness
- hives or welts
- large, hive-like swelling on the face, eyelids, lips, tongue, throat, hands, legs, feet, or genitals
- noisy breathing
- swelling of the mouth or throat

- agitation
- arm, back, or jaw pain
- chest heaviness
- confusion
- decreased urine
- dizziness
- orthostasis
- drowsiness
- dry mouth
- extra heartbeat
- fainting
- flushed, dry skin
- fruit-like breath odor
- headache
- increased hunger
- increased thirst
- increased urination
- irritability
- lightheadedness
- muscle pain or cramps
- nervousness
- nightmares
- numbness or tingling in the hands, feet, or lips
- pounding in the ears
- rapid, deep breathing
- restlessness
- seeing, hearing, or feeling things that are not there
- seizures
- slow or fast heartbeat
- stomach cramps
- sweating
- unexplained weight loss
- unusual feeling of excitement
- vomiting