



Psychotropic Medication Commonly Prescribed for Children and Youth

Disclaimer: This document provides an overview of psychotropic medication use among children and youth in foster care. Always discuss specific questions about the medication including potential side effects with a licensed clinical professional.

Purpose

The purpose of this Tip Sheet is to provide a quick reference to psychotropic medications that may be prescribed for children and adolescents in foster care.

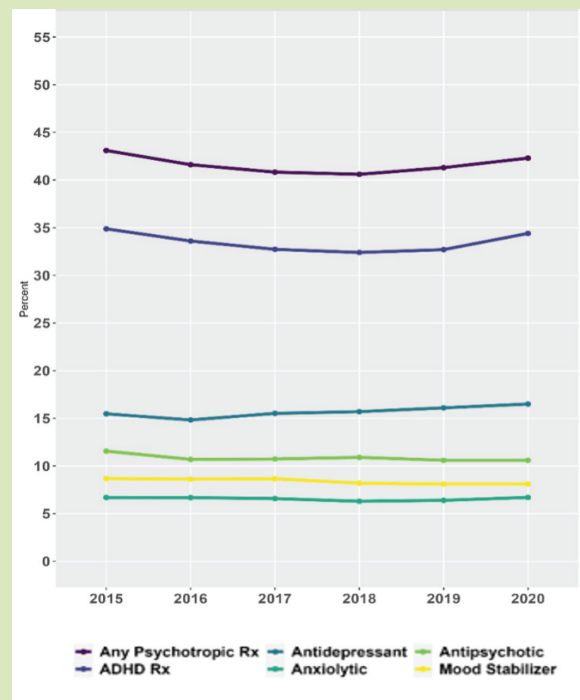
What is a psychotropic medication?

This is a medication that is used to treat mental health disorders. There are five main types of psychotropic medications.

- 1 Antidepressants** are for depression
- 2 Anti-anxiety medications** (anxiolytics) are used for panic attacks, phobias, generalized anxiety, and other types of anxiety disorders.
- 3 Stimulants** are used for attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder.
- 4 Antipsychotics** are used for schizophrenia and psychotic disorders and can be used for mood disorders.
- 5 Mood Stabilizers** are used for bipolar disorder.

The [U.S. Food and Drug Administration \(FDA\) Medication Guides](#) webpage provides a searchable database where you can type in the medication name and it will list the latest warnings and patient medication guides.

Psychotropic Medication Trends in Maryland Foster Care



30% received an ADHD medication



15% received an antidepressant



10% received an antipsychotic







8% received a mood stabilizer



Psychotropic Medication Overview

Table 1 is not a complete list of psychotropic medications. Only a few psychotropic medications are approved by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for use in children and adolescents with a mental health disorder. When a psychotropic medication is prescribed but does not have an FDA-approval, this is called 'off-label' use. Medications sometimes are prescribed off-label when a child or adolescent does not respond to first line medication.

Table 1: Psychotropic Medication Overview

Primary Role for Use in Children & Adolescents	Medication (Brand Name)	FDA Approved Indication & Age	Possible Side Effects	What to Look For
 Antidepressants Medications commonly used to treat 1-Depression/Major Depressive Disorder (MDD) 2-Obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) 3-Generalized anxiety disorder (GAD)	Citalopram (Celexa)	---	Nausea, stomach upset, dry mouth, extreme sweating, trouble sleeping, irritability, agitation, weight changes, tremor	Depression that is getting worse and thoughts about suicide
	Escitalopram (Lexapro)	MDD: ages 12-17		
	Fluoxetine (Prozac)	MDD: ages 8-17 OCD: ages 7-17		
	Fluvoxamine (Luvox)	OCD: ages 8-17		
	Sertraline (Zoloft)	OCD: ages 6-17		
	Desvenlafaxine (Pristiq)	---	Abnormal physical weakness or lack of energy, increased sweating, nausea, constipation, vomiting, dizziness, headache, increase in blood pressure, loss of appetite or weight, stomach or colon problems, nervousness, tremor, blurred vision	Thoughts of suicide and behavior
	Duloxetine (Cymbalta)	GAD: ages 7-17		
	Venlafaxine (Effexor)	---		
	Bupropion (Wellbutrin)	---	Sleepiness, headache, constipation, dry mouth, agitation, nervousness, weight changes, flushing, sweating, tremors, changes in blood pressure	Male erection that is unwanted, painful and lasts a long time (Trazodone), seizures (Wellbutrin), low white blood cell count (Remeron)
	Mirtazapine (Remeron)	---		
 Stimulants & non-Stimulants Medications commonly used to treat attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)	Amphetamine/dextroamphetamine (Adderall)	ADHD: ages 6-17	Nervousness, insomnia, loss of appetite, abdominal pain, weight loss, nausea, jittery, increase pulse, palpitations, dizziness	Slower growth, the doctor should monitor this – it will not stop a child from growing; watch blood pressure and heart rate
	Dexmethylphenidate (Focalin)	ADHD: ages 6-17		
	Lisdexamfetamine (Vyvanse)	ADHD: ages 6-17		
	Methylphenidate (Ritalin)	ADHD: ages 6-17		
	Atomoxetine (Strattera)	ADHD: ages 6-17	Stomach pain, vomiting, loss appetite, headache, dizzy	Changes in blood pressure
	Guanfacine (Intuniv)	ADHD: ages 6-17	Low blood pressure, drowsy, dry mouth, constipation	Changes in blood pressure
	Clonidine (Kapvay)	ADHD: ages 6-17		
 Antipsychotics Medications commonly used to treat schizophrenia, psychosis, bipolar disorder	Aripiprazole (Abilify)	Tourette syndrome ages 6-18 Irritability w/autism: ages 6-17 Schizophrenia: ages 13-17 Bipolar: ages 10-17	Drowsiness/sleepy, constipation, dry mouth, weight gain, vision changes, dizziness	Excess weight gain, increase in blood sugar, increase in blood pressure, increase in cholesterol **IMPORTANT: Muscle stiffness, high fever, sweating, tremors, confusion, rigid muscles, drooling, trouble swallowing**
	Brexipiprazole (Rexulti)	Schizophrenia: ages 13-17		
	Olanzapine (Zyprexa)	Schizophrenia: ages 13-17 Bipolar: ages 13-17		
	Paliperidone (Invega)	Schizophrenia: ages 12-17		
	Quetiapine (Seroquel)	Schizophrenia: ages 13-17 Bipolar: ages 10-17		
	Risperidone (Risperdal)	Irritability w/autism: ages 5-17 Schizophrenia: ages 13-17 Bipolar: ages 10-17		
 Mood Stabilizers Medications commonly used to treat mood disorders (all except lithium are used to treat seizure disorders)	Carbamazepine (Tegretol)	---	Dizziness, sleepy, vomiting, constipation, stomach aches	Serious rash: Stevens Johnson Syndrome – can start with face & tongue swelling, skin pain, blisters
	Divalproex (Depakote)	---		
	Valproic Acid (Depakene)	---		
	Lamotrigine (Lamictal)	---		
	Lithium (Eskalith)	Bipolar: ages 7-17	Fatigue, nausea, weight gain, increase urination, thirsty, stomach cramps, low thyroid function, hair loss	Severe tremors, extreme sleepiness, repeated vomiting/diarrhea

Note: --- denotes there is no FDA approved indication for the treatment of a child mental health condition.

Resources Antidepressant medication information: <https://www.fda.gov/consumers/free-publications-women/depression-medicines>
 MDH-Behavioral Health Administration: <https://health.maryland.gov/bha/pages/index.aspx>

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