

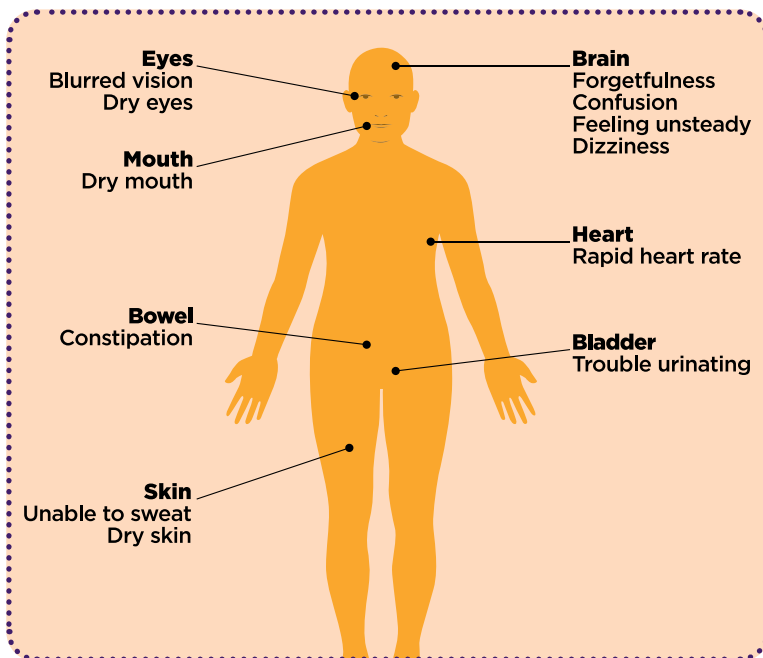
SIDE EFFECTS FROM YOUR MEDICINES? 5 QUESTIONS TO ASK

Medicines can help you feel better, but they can also cause unwanted effects.

If you (or someone you care for) have noticed problems like forgetfulness, confusion or feeling dizzy or unsteady, you might have put it down to getting older. Or maybe you're worried that one of your conditions is worsening.

These symptoms you're experiencing could be side effects from one or more of your medicines. These are sometimes called **anticholinergic** (*an-tee-koh-li-nur-jik*) side effects.

Symptoms you may notice



Box 1: These side effects can be caused by medicines used for:

- ▶ sleep problems
- ▶ depression
- ▶ behaviour or mood changes from dementia
- ▶ pain
- ▶ bladder-control problems
- ▶ allergies
- ▶ coughs and colds.

These could be medicines prescribed by your doctor, or over-the-counter medicines you can buy without a prescription.

For some people these side effects may be only mildly uncomfortable, but they can lead to more serious health problems, such as having a fall or needing hospital care.

The side effects from these medicines are more common if you are:

<p>Getting older. Your body becomes more sensitive to medicines, even those you have been taking for a long time.</p>	<p>Taking more than one medicine for the conditions listed in Box 1.</p>	<p>Starting a new medicine for a condition listed in Box 1.</p>	<p>Taking a high dose of one or more medicines for the conditions listed in Box 1.</p>	<p>Taking one or more medicines for the conditions listed in Box 1 for a longer time than is usually recommended.</p>

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Tell your doctor if you notice these symptoms, even if they're mild

Your doctor can find out what's causing the symptoms. If it's your medicines, they can suggest ways to manage or decrease these side effects.

Always talk to your doctor or pharmacist before stopping or changing any of your medicines.

5 questions to ask your doctor or pharmacist about your medicines

1. Why am I taking this medicine?

Ask if you're taking any medicines that you no longer need. Sometimes a medicine should only be used for a short time, or your condition may have improved. Maybe you're now taking another medicine which is more effective, and the original medicine can be stopped. A medicines review can help find any medicines that are not needed or not working well for you.

2. What are the side effects?

Ask if the symptoms you're experiencing are related to your age, health conditions or medicines.

3. What can I do about side effects?

Ask how you can manage or decrease side effects from your medicines. Your doctor might suggest a change to one or more of your medicines. A doctor or pharmacist can review your medicines and work out the medicines that are not working well for you.

4. What happens if I don't do anything?

Ask if the side effects of your medicines might get worse — or better — if you do nothing and keep taking the medicine(s).

5. Are there other things I can do to manage my condition?

Ask if there are any other treatments or things you can try to keep you feeling well. Lifestyle changes, such as exercising more or eating healthily, can be good options.

Find out more

- ▶ Talk to your doctor or pharmacist about your medicines and side effects you're worried about.
- ▶ Ask your doctor for a medicines review, where a pharmacist visits you in your home, aged-care facility or a place where you feel comfortable.
- ▶ Keep a medicines list. You can download a free paper medicines list, go to nps.org.au/consumers/keeping-a-medicines-list and download or print one today, or use the [MedicineWise app](#) to keep track of your medicines.
- ▶ Call Medicines Line to speak to a health professional about your medicines
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