

# Medications and Weight Gain



Summary: Certain medications can lead to weight gain as a side effect, attributed to mechanisms like increased appetite, metabolic changes, and fluid retention. Notable categories include antipsychotics, affecting appetite-regulating hormones; antidepressants, especially TCAs and certain SSRIs, influencing metabolism and appetite; steroids, causing fluid retention and heightened appetite; mood stabilizers like lithium and valproic acid; certain antiepileptic drugs impacting appetite and metabolism; beta-blockers slowing metabolism; insulin and some diabetes medications affecting blood sugar and metabolism; hormonal birth control methods with varying effects on weight gain; antihistamines possibly causing increased appetite; and specific antiretroviral drugs for HIV treatment. It's essential to understand that weight gain isn't universal, and its extent varies.

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Some medications are associated with weight gain as a side effect. This weight gain can be attributed to various mechanisms, including increased appetite, changes in metabolism, and fluid retention. Here are some categories of medications that are commonly known to be associated with weight gain:

- **Antipsychotics:** Certain antipsychotic medications, such as olanzapine, quetiapine, and risperidone, can lead to weight gain by affecting appetite-regulating hormones and increasing cravings for high-calorie foods.
- **Antidepressants:** Some antidepressants, especially tricyclic antidepressants (TCAs) and certain selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs), can lead to weight gain due to effects on metabolism and appetite.
- **Steroids:** Corticosteroids, often prescribed for conditions like asthma, autoimmune disorders, and inflammatory conditions, can cause fluid retention and increased appetite, leading to weight gain.
- **Mood Stabilizers:** Certain mood stabilizers used to treat bipolar disorder, such as lithium and valproic acid, can contribute to weight gain.
- **Certain Antiepileptic Drugs:** Some antiepileptic drugs, like gabapentin and pregabalin, can lead to weight gain by affecting appetite and metabolism.
- **Beta-Blockers:** These medications, used to treat conditions like high blood pressure and heart disease, can slow metabolism and lead to weight gain over time.
- **Insulin and Some Diabetes Medications:** Insulin therapy and certain oral medications used to treat diabetes can cause weight gain due to their effects on blood sugar regulation and metabolism.
- **Hormonal Birth Control:** Some hormonal birth control methods, such as certain types of birth control pills and injections, can lead to weight gain, although the extent of this effect varies among individuals.
- **Antihistamines:** Some antihistamines used to treat allergies can cause increased appetite and weight gain.
- **Some Antiretroviral Drugs:** Certain medications used in the treatment of HIV infection can lead to weight gain.

It's important to note that not everyone who takes these medications will experience weight gain, and the extent of weight gain can vary from person to person. If you are concerned about the potential weight gain associated with a medication you are taking, it's advisable to discuss your concerns with a healthcare professional. They can provide guidance on managing any potential side effects and help you make informed decisions about your treatment plan.