

Non-Prescription Medications and Your Kidneys

If you have chronic kidney disease, please check with your doctor or pharmacist **BEFORE** taking any medications, including the ones in this handout. Never take more than the recommended dose of any medication. Read the label carefully before buying over-the-counter (non-prescription) medications and follow the instructions.

WHY?

The kidneys work to get rid of many medications. If your kidneys are not working well, **medications might build up in your body and cause unwanted side effects.**

Here is a list of commonly used medications that are OK to take or not OK to take if you have kidney disease. This is not a complete list. When in doubt, consult your doctor, pharmacist or Kidney Care Clinic (bring this list with you).

Important Notes:



If you are on immune suppressing medications, some vaccines (live vaccines) may not be safe. Ask your doctor or pharmacist before you are immunized.



If you smoke and would like to quit, please refer to:

- BC Smoking Cessation Program- <http://bit.ly/1iM2Oy3>
- QuitNow.ca- <https://www.quitnow.ca/>



This brochure can be downloaded from the BC Renal Agency website:
bcrenalagency.ca

Over-The-Counter (Non-Prescription) Medications

Type	OK to take	Don't take	Don't take because...
Antacids	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TUMS (calcium carbonate), ranitidine (ZANTAC 75) or famotidine (PEPCID-AC) can be taken on an as-needed basis. • Omeprazole (OLEX) can also be taken on a as needed basis. • If you need something regularly, talk to your doctor or pharmacist. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Antacids that contain aluminum, magnesium (MAALOX, MYLANTA, GAVISCON) or sodium (ALKA-SELTZER) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your kidneys may not be able to get rid of the extra aluminum, magnesium and sodium. A build-up may cause unwanted effects. • Extra sodium can increase your blood pressure.
Anti-diarrhea medications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loperamide (IMODIUM), kaolin-pectin (KAOPECTATE) are safe on an as-needed basis. • Talk to your doctor if diarrhea lasts more than 2 days or is associated with fever. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bismuth subsalicylate (PEPTO-BISMOL) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This product contains salicylic acid that may harm your kidneys.
Anti-histamines (for hay fever or runny nose)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chlorpheniramine (CHLOR-TRIPOLON) or diphenhydramine (BENADRYL) are safe to use but may make you feel drowsy. • Half the usual dose of loratadine (CLARITIN), desloratadine (AERIUS) or cetirizine (REACTINE). • For nasal congestion related to allergy, nasal steroids triamcinolone (NASOCORT) or fluticasone (FLONASE), nasal sodium cromoglicate (CROMOLYN) & saline nasal sprays (SALINEX, HYDRASENSE) are safe options. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full dose of the types of antihistamines that do not make you feel drowsy, e.g. loratadine (CLARITIN), desloratadine (AERIUS) and cetirizine (REACTINE). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your kidneys may not be able to get rid of certain antihistamines. A build-up may cause unwanted side effects.
Cold / flu medications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topical nasal sprays such as xylometazoline (OTRIVIN) for less than 5 days may be okay. Check with your doctor or pharmacist. • Saline nasal sprays (SALINEX, HYDRASENSE), are safe for use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oral decongestants such as pseudoephedrine (SUDAFED) or phenylephrine which are found in many cough and cold products. • Products with multiple ingredients (e.g., DIMETAPP, NEOCITRAN, TYLENOL COLD and SINUS, CONTACT-C) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oral decongestants can increase blood pressure and cause your heart and kidneys to work too hard. • Products with multiple ingredients usually contain an oral decongestant—check the label.
Colonoscopy preparation	PEG-3350 solutions without electrolytes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oral phosphate containing bowel preparations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your kidneys may not be able to get rid of the extra phosphate. A build-up may cause unwanted effects.

Over-The-Counter (Non-Prescription) Medications

Type	OK to take	Don't take	Don't take because...
Cough medications (not safe for use in children under 6 yrs old)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any sugar-free cough syrup in people with diabetes. For productive cough, use guaifenesin (ROBITUSSIN syrup). For dry cough, use dextromethorphan or DM (BENYLIN DM or ROBITUSSIN DM syrup). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cough syrups that contain sugar if you have diabetes. Products with multiple ingredients (e.g. ROBITUSSIN COUGH & COLD, BENYLIN COUGH & COLD, BENYLIN COUGH & CHEST CONGESTION syrup). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cough syrup containing sugar may affect the sugar control in people with diabetes. Products with multiple ingredients usually contain an oral decongestant– check the label.
Fever/pain medications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acetaminophen (TYLENOL) Acetylsalicylic acid 75 to 81 mg (baby ASPIRIN) if over 19 years old and recommended by your doctor to prevent heart attack or stroke. Topical Diclofenac (Voltaren Emugel), can be used on an as-needed basis or for a short period of time (less than 1 week) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anti-inflammatories such as ibuprofen (ADVIL, MOTRIN), naproxen (ALEVE) or acetylsalicylic acid (ASPIRIN or ENTROPHEN) in doses over 325 mg per day. Acetylsalicylic acid (ASPIRIN) if under 19 years old. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anti-inflammatories can increase blood pressure, increase water retention and harm your kidneys.
Laxatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Docusate (COLACE) – a stool softener to decrease straining Lactulose syrup and Polyethylene glycol 3350 powder (LAX-A-DAY or RESTORALAX) are safe for longer term use to prevent and treat constipation. Sennosides (SENOKOT) and bisacodyl (DULCOLAX) are safe for short term or “as needed” use to relieve constipation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Laxatives that have magnesium or phosphate (MILK OF MAGNESIA, FLEET ENEMA or ORAL FLEET) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your kidneys may not be able to get rid of the extra magnesium or phosphate. Laxatives can cause diarrhea and dehydration which can hurt your kidneys.
Nausea & vomiting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dimenhydrinate (GRAVOL) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If you have a bad flu or illness which causes you to vomit or have diarrhea AND you are not able to eat or drink normally, contact your doctor or nurse. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If you are sick and not able to eat and drink normally, you may become dehydrated. Dehydration affects your kidney function and blood pressure.
Sore throat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acetaminophen (TYLENOL) HALLS or BRADOSOL if you do not have diabetes. RICOLA SUGAR FREE or BENTASIL SUGAR-FREE if you have diabetes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoid taking throat lozenges that contain sugar if you have diabetes. Sugar-free throat lozenges containing an artificial sweetener called acesulfame potassium, e.g. HALL'S, CHLORASEPTIC, FISHERMAN'S FRIEND SUGAR-FREE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Taking too many regular throat lozenges may affect sugar control in people with diabetes. Sugar-free throat lozenges containing acesulfame potassium may increase blood potassium level.
Herbal / alternative medications & vitamins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Talk to your doctor or pharmacist about what vitamins might be best for you. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AVOID all alternative or herbal medications until you have checked with your pharmacist or doctor. Avoid these vitamins: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vitamin A High dose vitamin C High dose vitamin B 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alternative or herbal medications may harm your kidneys or may interact with other medications. Most multivitamins can be harmful if your kidneys are not working very well.