

Medicines that may cause or make incontinence worse¹⁻³

Medicine	Mechanism	Type of incontinence
α-Adrenergic agonists e.g. ephedrine, phenylephrine, pseudoephedrine	Constrict the bladder outlet, voiding difficulty	Retention of urine*
α-Adrenergic antagonists e.g. prazosin, tamsulosin, terazosin	Relax the bladder outlet	Stress
Angiotensin converting enzyme (ACE) inhibitors e.g. captopril, enalapril, fosinopril, lisinopril, perindopril	Drug-induced cough	Stress
Anticholinergics e.g. antidepressants, antihistamines, benzhexol, benztropine, disopyramide, oxybutynin [†] , tolterodine [‡]	Reduce bladder contractions, voiding difficulty, constipation	Retention of urine*
β-Adrenergic agonists e.g. salbutamol, terbutaline	Relax the bladder outlet	Stress
β-Adrenergic antagonists e.g. atenolol, metoprolol, propranolol	Constrict the bladder outlet, voiding difficulty	Retention of urine*
Calcium channel blockers e.g. diltiazem, verapamil	Reduce bladder contractions, voiding difficulty	Retention of urine*
Cholinergics e.g. bethanechol	Increase bladder contractions	Urge
Cholinesterase inhibitors e.g. donepezil, galantamine, rivastigmine	Increase bladder contractions	Urge
Diuretics e.g. frusemide, hydrochlorothiazide, indapamide	Increase urine volume	Urge
Opioids e.g. morphine, oxycodone, tramadol	Reduce bladder contractions, confusion, constipation	Retention of urine* Functional [†]
Psychotropics		
e.g. amisulpride, clozapine, haloperidol, olanzapine, quetiapine, risperidone	Constipation, confusion, sedation, parkinsonism	Retention of urine* Functional [†] Stress
e.g. chlorpromazine, pericyazine, trifluoperazine	Anticholinergic effects (see above), confusion, sedation, parkinsonism, impaired mobility	Retention of urine* Functional [†]
e.g. benzodiazepines	Sedation, immobility	Functional [†]
e.g. selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs)	Increase bladder contractions, sedation, immobility	Urge Functional [†]
e.g. tricyclic antidepressants (TCAs)	Reduce bladder contractions, sedation, immobility	Retention of urine* Functional [†]

* That may result in incontinence.

† Indicated in the treatment of urge incontinence, but can exacerbate incontinence associated with retention of urine.

‡ Incontinence caused by factors outside the urinary tract (e.g. sedation or confusion).

References

1. Pharmaceutical Society of Australia. Australian pharmaceutical formulary and handbook 20th ed. Pharmaceutical Society of Australia, 2006.
2. Royal Australian College of General Practitioners. Managing incontinence in general practice: Clinical practice guidelines. 2002. <http://www.racgp.org.au/guidelines> (accessed 6 August 2009).
3. Queensland Health Joint HACC/MASS Continence Project. First steps in the management of urinary incontinence in community-dwelling older people: a clinical practice guideline for primary level clinicians (registered nurses and allied health professionals). 2007. <http://www.health.qld.gov.au/mass/haccproject.asp> (accessed 18 September 2009).



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