

**Drug Spotlight 19-1** *Bismuth subsalicylate (Pepto-Bismol, Kaopectate)*

<b>Classification</b>	Antidiarrheals, antiulcer agents, absorbents
<b>Indications/Definition</b>	The pink medicine that relieves five different gastrointestinal symptoms: heartburn, nausea, indigestion, upset stomach, and diarrhea
<b>Availability</b>	Suspension, tablets, and chewable tablets
<b>Contraindications/Precautions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Salicylate in this medication may make gout symptoms worse</li> <li>• May make ulcer symptoms worse</li> <li>• May make bleeding problems worse</li> <li>• Taking other salicylate medications with this drug may lead to overdose</li> <li>• Mothers should not breastfeed while taking this medication</li> </ul>
<b>Special Concerns</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This drug used only in teenagers 12 years of age and older and adults; younger children are usually not given medication for diarrhea, but managed with fluid replacement therapy only; in addition, this drug should never be used in a child or teenager with a viral illness because of the unknown association between salicylates and Reye's syndrome</li> <li>• Elderly patients should check with their physician before using this medication</li> </ul>
<b>Adverse Reactions/Side Effects</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Constipation</li> <li>• Tongue may turn black: normal, secondary to interaction of bismuth and the sulfides found in the digestive tract; subsides after discontinuation of medication</li> <li>• Stools turn black: same reason as tongue</li> </ul>

**Phenothiazines**

Phenothiazines block dopamine receptors in the area of the brain that stimulates vomiting. Two examples, chlorpromazine (Thorazine) and prochlorperazine (Compazine), are used to control the nausea and vomiting that occur with chemotherapy and can be administered orally, by injection, or by the intravenous (IV) route. In addition, prochlorperazine may be given as a rectal suppository. These drugs tend to produce sedation while treating the nausea and vomiting. These medications are available by prescription only.

**5-Hydroxytryptamine-3 Receptor Antagonists**

5-HT<sub>3</sub> is more commonly known as serotonin. Therefore, these medications are known as serotonin antagonists and are also commonly used to prevent and treat the nausea and vomiting associated with chemotherapy. They block the chemical serotonin, which is produced in the brain and in the stomach. Examples of this class of medications include dolasetron (Anzemet), ondansetron (Zofran), granisetron (Kytril), and palonosetron (Aloxi). These medications are all administered either orally or by the IV route. Additionally, Zofran may be given as an injection. These medications are available by prescription only.

**Antihistamines**

The action of antihistamines in decreasing nausea and vomiting is unclear. It is believed that these medications block signals to the brain's movement center. Therefore, they tend to work best on the nausea associated with motion sickness. Dramamine (dimenhydrinate), diphenhydramine (Benadryl), meclizine (Antivert, Bonine), and promethazine (Adgan, Phenergan, Promethacon) are examples of this class of drugs used for nausea and vomiting. All of these medications are available to be taken orally, and dimenhydrinate, diphenhydramine, and meclizine may be purchased OTC. Dimenhydrinate, diphenhydramine, and promethazine may also be administered by injection or by the IV route. Promethazine may also be given by rectal suppository.