

Master the Essentials: Nervous System Medications

This table shows the various classes of nervous system medications and key side effects, contraindications and precautions, and interactions for each class.

Class	Use	Side Effects	Contraindications and Precautions	Interactions	Example
Adrenergics	Extreme hypotension, severe wheezing, severe allergic reactions (anaphylactic shock)	Chest pain, fast heart rate, headache, increased blood glucose, nervousness, tissue death, tremors	Brain damage, CV and heart problems, glaucoma, hyperthyroidism	Adrenergic blockers, CNS drugs	Norepinephrine (Levophed), epinephrine
Adrenergic blockers	BPH, hypertension, cardiac arrhythmias, angina, prevention of heart attack, migraine headache	Confusion, decreased blood pressure, blood glucose, energy, heart rate	Asthma, atrioventricular block (heart block), chronic heart failure, diabetes, low blood pressure	Alcohol, digitalis, epinephrine, insulin, MAOIs, theophylline, TCAs	Alfuzosin (Uroxatral), doxazosin (Cardura), prazosin (Minipress) tamsulosin (Flomax), terazosin (Hytrin), acebutolol (Sectral), atenolol (Tenormin), bisoprolol (Zebeta), metoprolol (Lopresor), nadolol (Corgard), nebivolol (Bystolic), propranolol (Inderal LA)
Cholinergics	Glaucoma or other ocular hypertension, dementia associated with Alzheimer's disease	Bronchospasm; decreased heart rate, respirations, blood pressure; increased salivation, tears, and sweating; muscle cramps and weakness	Asthma, benign prostatic hypertrophy, cardiac disease, GI disorders, hyperthyroidism	Quinidine, procainamide	Pilocarpine (Pilopine), donepezil (Aricept)
Anticholinergics	Bladder, stomach, or intestinal spasms, poisoning	Blurred vision, confusion, decreased GI motility, dilation of pupils, drying of secretions, fever, flushing, headache, increased heart rate	Asthma, cardiac arrhythmias, COPD, GI or GU obstruction, glaucoma, hypertension	Digoxin, nitroglycerin, TCAs	Atropine (Atropen)
Salicylates	Pain, fever, inflammation. Heart attack, stroke, or angina prevention	Coma, depression, dizziness, headache, drowsiness, increased bleeding time, bruising, GI bleeding, liver and kidney disorders, tinnitus, rash	Asthma, bleeding disorders, lactation, pregnancy, vitamin K deficiency	Alcohol, antacids, anticoagulants, heparin, NSAIDs, insulin	Salicylic acid (aspirin)