

Beware of Serotonin Syndrome

def. Rare but serious drug reaction due to too much of the chemical serotonin in your brain

Know your drugs Ask your pharmacist about medicines that increase serotonin



Antidepressants
MAOI's are the highest risk serotonin medicines



Cough and cold
Cough & cold medicines with dextromethorphan or "DM"



Street drugs
E.g., ecstasy (MDMA), amphetamine, cocaine



Opioids and Pain Meds
E.g., tramadol, demerol, methadone, fentanyl



Natural drugs
E.g., St. John's wort, tryptophan, diet pills



Parkinson's disease
E.g., selegiline, rasagiline

When to watch Symptoms start within hours to 1 day of:



Upping a dose



Starting a new medicine



Taking a street drug

What to watch for Serotonin syndrome can look like other things – ask your doctor

Mild

Feeling nervous, difficulty sleeping
Shaking hands or feet
Nausea, diarrhea
Big pupils

Moderate

Side-to-side eye movements
Feeling restless, irritated
Muscle jerks
Sweating

Severe

Fever >38.5°C/101.3°F
Confusion
Coma
Death

What to do Do you have **mild** symptoms? What about **moderate** or **severe** symptoms?



Call your doctor or pharmacist



Go to the emergency room



Call 911

Prevent it If on a serotonin drug, ask your **prescriber AND pharmacist** before:

- ✓ Starting a new medicine
- ✓ Increasing the dose
- ✓ Taking street drugs
- ✓ Taking natural medicines
- ✓ Switching to a similar medicine
- ✓ Taking cough and cold medicine

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