

Caring 4 You Tutoring Services – Anneliese Garrison, BSN, RN, CLNC [Ret]

RESPIRATORY MEDICATIONS TO STUDY FOR THE NCLEX:

Categories	Therapeutic Use	Common Medications	Side Effects
<p>Bronchodilators</p> <p>Short – Acting (SABA)</p> <p>Long- Acting (LABA)</p> <p>Anticholinergics</p>	<p>Relax airway muscles to open them up.</p> <p>For quick relief (rescue inhalers)</p> <p>For long-term control, often combined with steroids.</p> <p>Blocks muscle contractions</p>	<p>Albuterol</p> <p>Salmeterol (in Advair). (may cause increase in BP)</p> <p>Formoterol (should never be taken alone due to increase risk of death)</p> <p>Ipratropium (in Combivent)</p>	<p>Bronchodilator side effects vary but commonly include tremors, nervousness, rapid heart rate/palpitations, headache, muscle cramps, dry mouth, and nausea, with effects often depending on the type (like albuterol vs. theophylline) and delivery method (inhaler vs. pill). Less common or serious issues can involve throat irritation, unusual heart rhythm, or allergic reactions, while specific drugs like theophylline can cause rashes or seizures, and combination inhalers (with steroids) might increase pneumonia risk.</p>
<p>Anti-inflammatories (Corticosteroids)</p>	<p>Reduce inflammation in the lungs</p>	<p>Fluticasone (in Advair).</p> <p>Budesonide</p> <p>Montelukast (may cause negative psychological behaviors.)</p>	<p>Inhaled steroids can cause a sore mouth or throat, a cough, hoarse voice, and oral thrush (a fungal infection in the mouth).</p> <p>Injected steroids can cause temporary pain, swelling, and skin</p>

			<p>lightening or thinning at the injection site</p> <p>Prolonged use of systemic corticosteroids (like oral tablets) can lead to more serious, potentially irreversible problems: Osteoporosis, infection, muscle weakness.</p>
Combination Drugs	Mix bronchodilators and steroids, like Advair (fluticasone/salmeterol) or Combivent (albuterol/ipratropium).		
Mucolytics	Thin and loosen mucus	<p>Acetylcysteine Guaifenesin (Mucinex)</p>	<p>and as an antidote for acetaminophen (Tylenol) overdose to prevent liver damage. Mucolytic side effects vary but often include nausea, vomiting, stomach upset, diarrhea, and rashes, with inhaled forms potentially causing bronchospasm, sore throat, or a foul odor/taste. Serious reactions like severe breathing issues or allergic signs (swelling, hives) require immediate medical attention, while common, mild</p>

			effects often resolve as the body adjusts.
Methylxanthines	Oral drugs that relax airway muscles	Theophylline	Theophylline can cause various side effects, which are generally mild at normal doses but can become severe or life-threatening if the levels in the blood become too high (toxicity). N/V, headache, trouble sleeping. Theophylline levels are within the typical therapeutic range (less than 20 mcg/mL),
Respiratory Stimulants	used for specific conditions to encourage breathing	Doxapram	High BP, agitation, N/V
Decongestants	used to temporarily relieve nasal and sinus congestion caused by the common cold, hay fever, or other upper respiratory allergies.	Phenylephrine/Pseudoephedrine (Sudafed) , Claritin – D, Zyrtec	nervousness, dizziness, sleeplessness, and headache. It works by narrowing blood vessels, which can raise blood pressure, so people with high blood pressure, heart problems, diabetes, or thyroid conditions should consult a healthcare provider before use.
Antihistamines	blocking the effects of histamine, a natural chemical produced during an allergic	Diphenhydramine (Benadryl), Hydroxyzine (Vistaril), also used for anxiety	Common side effects include drowsiness, dizziness, poor coordination, dry

	reaction, and has strong anticholinergic and sedative properties.		mouth/nose/throat, constipation, and upset stomach.
Cough Suppressant	decreasing activity in the part of the brain that triggers the coughing reflex.	Dextromethorphan (DMX) (used as cough suppressant, Major Depressive Disorder, Uncontrollable laughing or crying)	Dizziness, drowsiness, nausea, stomach pain, nervousness, restlessness
Nicotine Dosage Form Education Which nicotine replacement dosage form would be least likely to help a nicotine craving within 30 minutes?	Patch	Patient Education Varenicline Which of the following would be an inaccurate patient education point about varenicline?	You should educate your patient that vivid dreams are a possible adverse effect.

***Bold Medications are Most Common**