

(e.g., gabapentin, carbamazepine, clonazepam) for neuropathic pain ([Rastogi and Campbell, 2014](#)). Other medications commonly prescribed include stool softeners and laxatives for constipation, antiemetics for nausea and vomiting, diphenhydramine for itching, steroids for inflammation and bone pain, and dextroamphetamine and caffeine for possible increased pain and sedation ([Table 5-9](#)).

Safety Alert

The use of placebos to determine whether the patient is having pain is unjustified and unethical; a positive response to a placebo, such as a saline injection, is common in patients who have a documented organic basis for pain. Therefore the deceptive use of placebos does not provide useful information about the presence or severity of pain. The use of placebos can cause side effects similar to those of opioids, can destroy the patient's trust in the health care staff, and raises serious ethical and legal questions. The American Society of Pain Management Nursing has issued a position statement against the use of placebos to treat pain ([Amstein, Broglio, Wuhrman, et al, 2011](#)).

TABLE 5-8

Coanalgesic Adjuvant Drugs

Drug	Dosage	Indications	Comments
Antidepressants			
Amitriptyline	0.2-0.5 mg/kg PO hs Titrate upward by 0.25 mg/kg q 5-7 days prn Available in 10- and 25-mg tablets Usual starting dose: 10-25 mg	Continuous neuropathic pain with burning, aching, dysesthesia with insomnia	Provides analgesia by blocking reuptake of serotonin and norepinephrine, possibly slowing transmission of pain signals Helps with pain related to insomnia and depression (use nortriptyline if patient is oversedated) Analgesic effects seen earlier than antidepressant effects
Nortriptyline	0.2-1.0 mg/kg PO AM or bid Titrate up by 0.5 mg q 5-7 days Maximum: 25 mg/dose	Neuropathic pain as above without insomnia	Side effects include dry mouth, constipation, urinary retention
Anticonvulsants			
Gabapentin	5 mg/kg PO hs Increase to bid on day 2, tid on day 3 Maximum: 300	Neuropathic pain	Mechanism of action unknown Side effects include sedation, ataxia, nystagmus, dizziness