# What Medications are Prescribed for Anxiety Disorders?

Mental health disorders are complex and require treatment in most cases. Thankfully, there are many types of treatment that can be added to a patient’s treatment. One of these forms of treatment is medications. Medications for mental health disorders are typically not the only type of treatment the patient is undergoing. Usually, medications are used alongside psychotherapy for the best chance of recovery. The [best medications for mental health](https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/mental-health-medications) disorders are broken up into several groups. These groups are SSRIs, SNRIs, mood stabilizers, antipsychotics, and benzodiazepines. [Psychiatric care](https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC5244449/#:~:text=There%20is%20no%20robust%20evidence,compared%20to%20each%20treatment%20alone.) can help patients with symptom management so that they can work through other challenges in therapy. Sometimes, people have preconceived stigmas regarding medications used to help mental health. This can be due to people having misconceptions or fearing certain side effects. While it is valid to have these fears, it’s important to remember that there is nothing wrong with needing medication for your mental health. These medications can improve people’s lives in ways that can’t always be done with other avenues. Medications have many different uses that range across mental health medications.

## Types of Medications

When looking into medication options, it’s important to work with someone holding the correct license to prescribe medications. It’s also important to discuss side effects with your physician to make sure you know what things to look out for when starting new medications. Another thing to discuss is the risk of dependence on certain classes of drugs. It’s important to look out for signs of dependence because this can prevent further issues such as addiction or misuse of medications. The process of starting new medications can be difficult and long because it’s not always easy to find what works for a person on the first try. It’s important to stay patient and work on finding the best medication that works best for you and has the least amount of side effects.

* **Selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs)** are a type of antidepressant that works by blocking the re-absorption of serotonin in the brain. This group of antidepressants works by allowing more serotonin in the brain, which can lead to better mood and decrease symptoms. These types of antidepressants are typically prescribed for depression. However, they can also treat anxiety disorders, obsessive-compulsive disorder, eating disorders, and PTSD. Some common SSRIs include Fluoxetine, Sertraline, and Escitalopram. The most common side effects that people experience on SSRIs are headaches, difficulty sleeping, nausea, and weight changes. SSRIs are known as one of the [best medications for anxiety](https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/talking-therapies-medicine-treatments/medicines-and-psychiatry/ssri-antidepressants/overview/).
* **Serotonin-norepinephrine reuptake inhibitors (SNRIs)** are a type of antidepressant that works by blocking the re-absorption of serotonin and norepinephrine in the brain. This group of antidepressants is typically used for major depressive disorder (MDD). It can also be used for anxiety disorders in some cases. Some common SNRIs are Venlafaxine and Duloxetine. The most common side effects that people experience with SNRIs are nausea, headaches, constipation, sexual dysfunction, and dizziness. SNRIs are known as one of the [best medications for anxiety](https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/treatments/24797-snri).
* **Norepinephrine and dopamine reuptake inhibitors (NDRIs)** are a group of antidepressants that work by blocking the absorption of norepinephrine and dopamine in the brain. Having more neurotransmitters in the brain is thought to help with mood, stress, and attention levels. These types of antidepressants treat major depressive disorder (MDD). They are typically prescribed to people who don’t respond to SSRIs. They can also be used to treat seasonal affective disorder (SAD), bipolar depression, and attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Some common NDRIs are Dexmethylphenidate and Bupropion. The most common side effects that people experience with NDRIs are trouble sleeping, headache, weight loss, and anxiety. NDRIs are known as one of the best medications for anxiety.
* **Mood stabilizers** are a type of [medication that is used to help stabilize mood](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK556141/). These are mostly prescribed as a treatment for bipolar disorder. These types of medicine can help treat both bipolar I and bipolar II disorders. Some common mood stabilizers are lithium and anticonvulsants. The most common side effects that people experience with mood stabilizers are skin problems, nausea, headaches, weight gain, and dizziness.
* [**Stimulants**](https://ufhealth.org/conditions-and-treatments/stimulants) are a group of drugs that increase the messaging between the brain and the body. They work by increasing a patient’s heart and breathing rate. There are specific stimulants that work on parts of the body, depending on what is needed for the patient’s circumstances. They are commonly prescribed for ADHD, asthma, and narcolepsy. Some common types of prescription stimulants are amphetamines and methylphenidate. The most common side effects that people experience with stimulants are tremors, headache, chest pains, and vomiting.
* **Antipsychotics** are a group of [drugs that will usually treat psychosis symptoms](https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/treatments/24692-antipsychotic-medications). They work by regulating neurotransmitters that may be out of balance. If these neurotransmitters are out of balance, the patient can experience circumstances of psychosis, which can include hallucinations and delusions. These drugs can be used to treat schizophrenia, bipolar disorders, major depressive disorders (MDD), borderline personality disorder, and mania. Some common types of these groups of drugs are Chlorpromazine and Fluphenazine. The most common types of side effects that people experience with antipsychotics are blurred vision, sexual problems, weight gain, and diabetes.
* **Benzodiazepines** are a type of drug that works as a depressant. These drugs are typically used for anxiety and helping people sleep. These types of drugs can be addictive, so it’s important to discuss these risks with your doctor. Some common types of these include alprazolam and diazepam. The most common types of side effects that people experience with Benzodiazepines are tiredness, dizziness, coordination, and confusion. These can be known as the best medications for anxiety.

If you think that medication might be helpful for your mental health journey, we can help. Michigan Psychological Care offers psychiatric care via psychiatric nurse practitioners (NPs), and these NPs are under an overseeing physician. We are eager to help you on your journey!

Psychiatrists and nurse practitioners can both prescribe medications for patients. The main [difference between psychiatrists and nurse practitioners](https://www.wgu.edu/blog/psychiatric-nurse-practitioner-vs-psychiatrist2002.html) is the education and credentials needed. Nurses typically will earn a master's in nursing and a degree with a focus in psychiatry. However, nurse practitioners can diagnose, develop treatment plans, and prescribe medications to patients in most cases. Occasionally, there are more complex cases that might require a nurse practitioner to get insight from their overseeing psychiatrist. But most of the time, nurse practitioners can do the same that a physiatrist can do.

We understand how starting new treatments or medications can be scary. We also want to remind you that you are worth it and deserve care. It’s always best to try different things to see what works best for you is always beneficial. Michigan Psychological Care can help you with this process. If you are interested in working with us, [contact us](https://michiganpsychologicalcare.com/contact.php) today.

**References**

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