

ANXIETY IN THE CLASSROOM

Medication Treatment for Pediatric Anxiety and OCD

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AnxietyInTheClassroom.org

OVERVIEW



1 Medication treatment for pediatric anxiety and OCD

- Common medication used to treat anxiety in youth
- Common medication used to treat OCD in youth

2 What to tell families regarding medication concerns and side effects

PLEASE NOTE: The International OCD Foundation has no conflicts of interest or financial relationships related to the content of this presentation.

MEDICATION TREATMENT FOR PEDIATRIC ANXIETY & OCD

If you have a student with anxiety/OCD in your school, it's possible that they may be taking psychiatric medication as part of their treatment.

It is important for school nurses to understand medication treatment not only because **they may be the person administering the dose**, depending on the student's schedule, but also to **be aware of any side effects or symptoms the student may need to manage because of their medication.**



MEDICATION TREATMENT FOR PEDIATRIC ANXIETY & OCD



In general, psychiatric medication may be considered if the student's symptoms are moderately severe and/or not helped by CBT/ERP alone.

A specific kind of antidepressants known as **serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SRIs)** have been found to be the most helpful in reducing anxiety/OCD symptoms in youth, making it easier for them to actively engage in their CBT/ERP treatment.

This is consistent with the practice recommendations from *the American Academy of Pediatrics* and *the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*.

MEDICATION TREATMENT FOR PEDIATRIC ANXIETY & OCD

Medications should only be prescribed by a licensed medical professional (such as a pediatrician or psychiatrist) who has experience working with kids and teens.

This medical professional would ideally work together with the rest of the student's treatment team to develop a plan.



SRI's and SNRIs are typically prescribed to treat anxiety/OCD in kids. As a school nurse, you may be presented with **questions** about how these medications work, and what the side effects may be.



MEDICATIONS USED TO TREAT ANXIETY IN YOUTH

In this video, Evelyn Stewart, MD, talks about the medications that are typically prescribed to help manage these conditions in children.



COMMON MEDICATIONS USED TO TREAT ANXIETY IN YOUTH

Medication	Starting Pediatric Dosage	Usual Effective Dosage
Citalopram (Celexa®)	5 – 10 mg/day	20 – 40 mg/day
Escitalopram (Lexapro®)	2.5 – 5 mg/day	5 – 20 mg/day
Fluvoxamine (Luvox®)	25 – 50 mg/day	50 – 200 mg/day
Fluoxetine (Prozac®)	5 – 10 mg/day	10 – 40 mg/day
Paroxetine (Paxil®)	5 – 10 mg/day	10 – 40 mg/day
Sertraline (Zoloft®)	12.5 – 25 mg/day	25 – 100 mg/day
Duloxetine (Cymbalta®)	30 mg/day	30 – 60 mg/day

COMMON MEDICATIONS USED TO TREAT ANXIETY IN YOUTH

Medication	Pediatric Dosage
Citalopram (Celexa®)	10 – 40 mg/day
Escitalopram (Lexapro®)	10 – 20 mg/day
Fluvoxamine (Luvox®)	50 – 300 mg/day
Fluoxetine (Prozac®)	10 – 80 mg/day
Paroxetine (Paxil®)	10 – 60 mg/day
Sertraline (Zoloft®)	50 – 200 mg/day

A non-SRI medication that may be used to treat pediatric OCD is Clomipramine (Anafranil®), which is a tricyclic antidepressant (TCA), for 50 – 200 mg/day.

MEDICATION TREATMENT FOR OCD IN YOUTH

Longer trials and higher dosages are often required for OCD treatment compared to depression and anxiety treatment.

While other mental health conditions may only require 4–6 weeks to see results, *youth with OCD often need 10–12 weeks* to see the full effect of a medication.

Doses of psychiatric medications may also be higher for youth with OCD than for youth with anxiety or other mental health conditions – the student's prescribing physician will determine the best dose for them, and will alter it as indicated as the treatment course progresses.



HOW LONG SHOULD A CHILD TAKE MEDICATION FOR ANXIETY/ OCD?

In this video, Evelyn Stewart, MD, talks about the length of time that medication may be prescribed for and what to consider when taking medication.



What to tell students and their families:

Common medication side effects.



1 Nausea or upset stomach.

2 Sleepiness or insomnia

3 Weight gain

4 Racing heartbeat

5 Difficulty with sitting still or concentrating

6 A heightened sense of energy

7 Dry mouth

8 Problems with urination

WHAT TO TELL STUDENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES

Common Medication
Side Effects

One very important **side effect** to be aware of is the potential for suicidal thoughts and urges.

The FDA issues a “black box warning” regarding the use of antidepressants in pediatric populations because of this. The highest risk period for suicidal thoughts and urges are when starting or increasing the dose of the medication.



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WHAT TO TELL STUDENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES



- In spite of the potential side effects, these medications appear very safe with long-term use.
- The side effects typically reverse when the medications are stopped, and there are no long-term impacts on the student.
- There is no current evidence that taking psychiatric medication does permanent damage to the youth, neurodevelopmentally or otherwise.

WHAT TO TELL STUDENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES

It is important to note that psychiatric medications help to **control** and **decrease** symptoms, but that they do not “cure” mental health conditions.

Both anxiety and OCD are usually able to be well-controlled and managed when proper treatment is in place.



How school nurses can help students with Anxiety/ OCD:

Can you think of any other examples?

- 1** Screen and assess students.
- 2** Educate parents on side effects of medication.
- 3** Monitor/evaluate students to determine progress.
- 4** Help in administering medications when given permission
- 5** Educate parents on anxiety/OCD.
- 6** Provide resources for parents and keep them engaged.

RESOURCES FOR SCHOOL NURSES.



RESOURCES FOR SCHOOL NURSES.

- **School Nurse State Association:** State associations often offer conferences, education material on various medical topics, and opportunities for continuing education classes. State school nurse associations are also a great resource to find out what topics are especially important in the community you live and work.
- **The National Center for School Mental Health (NCSMH):** This organization strengthens policies and programs in school mental health to improve learning and promote success for America's youth.
- **The Mental Health Training Intervention for Health Providers in Schools (MH-TIPS):** An innovative in-service training and implementation support system for school health providers aimed at enhancing their competence in managing the needs of students with or at risk for emotional and behavioral difficulties that interfere with learning.
- **The Importance of School Nurses in Student's Mental Health:** This article by EduHealth does a great job of going over the importance of a school nurse in identifying mental health needs in a student.
- **Northeastern University School Health Academy (NEUSHA):** This organization has numerous CE available for school nurses. Numerous topics all relevant to school nursing.

THANK YOU.

QUESTIONS ?

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