**Amantadine**

**How it works:**
This medication reduces dyskinesia and can reduce symptoms of PD in some patients

**Side Effects:**
- *Confusion:* can cause or worsen confusion in patients with advanced PD
- *Hallucinations:* can cause or worsen hallucinations in patients with advanced PD
- *Lower Extremity Edema*

**Trihexphenidyl ("Artane")**

**How it works:**
Trihexphenidyl is used to treat tremor in PD

**Side Effects:**
This medication can cause or worsen the following problems in older patients:

- *Confusion*
- *Lightheadedness upon standing*
- *Urinary retention*
- *Dry eyes*
- *Hallucinations*
What causes Parkinson’s disease?

Parkinson’s disease (PD) is a progressive movement disorder caused by a reduction of specific neurons that produce a chemical called dopamine. It is required for parts of the brain that control movement and coordination. Many of the treatments for PD are aimed at replacing or prolonging dopamine activity.

Ropinirole (“Requip”) & pramipexole (“Mirapex”)

How they work:
These are called “dopamine agonists” because they activate the dopamine receptors in your brain.

Side Effects

Common:
- Mild stomach upset and sleepiness. These tend to go away after a few weeks, and can often be avoided by starting at a low dose and increasing slowly.

Less Common:
- “Sleep attacks”: when sleep comes on very suddenly.
- Impulse control disorder: some patients develop compulsive behaviors like gambling, porn addiction, or overeating.
- Hallucinations and confusion: in patients with advanced PD

Carbidopa-Levodopa (“Sinemet”)

How it works:
Levodopa is converted into dopamine in your brain. Carbidopa stops the breakdown of levodopa in blood so that it can get into the brain.

Dosage: comes in immediate release (“IR”) and long acting (“CR” or “SA”)

Side Effects

- Stomach upset: this medication should be taken with a small snack like crackers. It should not be taken with meals, because it competes with protein for absorption, so it’s best to wait an hour before and after meals.
- Motor fluctuations: after several years of treatment with carbidopa-levodopa, people can develop fluctuations in their symptoms depending on when they last took their meds. This can result in the need for frequent dosing
- Dyskinesia: after taking carbidopa-levodopa for a few years, patients often develop “wiggly” or swaying movements called dyskinesia.
- Lightheadedness: carbidopa-levodopa can cause your blood pressure to drop, resulting in light-headedness.
- Hallucinations: carbidopa-levodopa can cause or worsen hallucinations in people with advanced PD

Rasagiline (“Azilect”) & Selegiline (“Eldepryl”)

How they work:
These meds slow the body’s breakdown of levodopa. Some studies suggest that rasagiline & selegline may slow down the progression of PD, but other studies have not supported this.

Side Effects

- Minimal. However, they can theoretically cause harmful increases in blood pressure if you eat very large amounts of food containing tyramine, such as processed meats and some aged cheeses, or are taking certain antidepressants or pain meds.

Entacapone (Comtan)

How it works:
Slows the body’s breakdown of levodopa, and only works when taken with carbidopa-levodopa.

Side Effects:
- Can turn urine orange, and rarely can cause diarrhea.
- Can worsen the side effects of carbidopa-levodopa.