

Be Aware of Opioid Potentiator Medications



Health Net* and CalViva Health want to help you and your patients prevent opioid medication misuse. When used in conjunction with opioids, some medications enhance the opiate effect. Please be aware of such potentiator medications, including those listed in the table below.

Although this is not a comprehensive list, it is important to consider these medication classes when prescribing in order to best protect the health and safety of patients and combat misuse. Providers should consider the interaction of an opioid and a potentiator to determine the risks and benefits associated with their combination.

Opioid potentiators

Drug class	Medication	Significant considerations
Central nervous system (CNS) depressants		
Benzodiazepines (BZDs)	alprazolam, clonazepam, diazepam, lorazepam	Both opioids and BZDs sedate users, suppress breathing and impair cognitive function
Antihistamines	promethazine	Increased risk for respiratory depression, coma and death when used with opioids **The combination of carisoprodol, BZDs and opioids results in a heroin-like high
Antipsychotics	quetiapine	
Barbiturates	phenobarbital	
BZD-like hypnotics	zolpidem, zaleplon, eszopiclone	
Gabapentinoids	gabapentin, pregabalin	
Muscle relaxants	tizanidine, cyclobenzaprine, baclofen, carisoprodol**	
Pharmacokinetic enhancers		
Antibiotics	clarithromycin	CYP450 inhibition leads to increase in serum opioid concentration
Antifungals	itraconazole, ketoconazole, posaconazole	
HIV drugs	ritonavir, atazanavir, indinavir, cobicistat	Ultimately results in strong CNS depression
Other potentiators		
Stimulants	dextroamphetamine, methylphenidate	Extremely high abuse potential Used in combination to combat fatigue and sedation caused by high daily doses of opioids or to increase the analgesic effect

The chart above was adapted from information provided by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS).