

SELECTIVE SEROTONIN REUPTAKE INHIBITORS (SSRIs) Side Effects:

Medications in this category: escitalopram (Lexapro), citalopram (Celexa), sertraline (Zoloft), fluoxetine (Prozac), paroxetine (Paxil), fluvoxamine (Luvox)

Most common (medication with highest incidence in parentheses): nausea (sertraline), insomnia and anxiety (fluoxetine), constipation, sedation, sexual side effects, weight gain (last four: paroxetine), emotional blunting, headache.

Serious but rare: low sodium, mainly in the elderly; gastrointestinal bleeding, especially when combined with NSAIDs such as ibuprofen or naproxen.

Pregnancy: Controversial data regarding cardiovascular birth defect with first trimester paroxetine (Paxil) exposure. Larger and more recent studies show no overall increased risk for birth defects with SSRIs. Conflicting reports with some showing decreased gestational age, low birth weight, poor neonatal adaptation, low APGAR scores. Conflicting reports regarding SSRI use in later pregnancy and persistent pulmonary high blood pressure (hypertension) (PPHN). Neonatal toxicity reported as transient jitteriness, tremor and rapid breathing. No problems detected in behavioral or cognitive development—greatest data with fluoxetine (Prozac).

This is a simplified list of side effects focusing on what is common or severe because complete lists of more rare and less serious side effects are often overwhelming. If desired, complete lists of potential side effects can be found on reputable web sites like Drugs.com.