



## Accurate Clinic

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Serotonin Syndrome is a rare emergency that can be associated with taking several types of medications commonly used for pain management as well as for anxiety and/or depression. It is most commonly seen when combinations of these medications are used or when excessive amounts of one or a combination of them are ingested.

The symptoms of Serotonin Syndrome are very nonspecific and may initially be overlooked or underappreciated unless viewed with an informed perspective. The hallmark symptoms are confusion, fever, cold sweats and muscle rigidity, worse in the legs. Common symptoms associated with this syndrome also include skin flushing, shaking, decreased responsiveness, diarrhea and sometimes incontinence.

While the Serotonin Syndrome does respond to treatment, it is a potentially life-threatening condition and as such early treatment is important. Since early recognition is important to obtain treatment, inform your family members and those around you to not hesitate to call 911 should you develop these symptoms. Risk of developing these symptoms are greatest particularly if associated with a recent increase in dosage or addition of a new medication.

The list of medications that might precipitate a Serotonin Syndrome is growing but generally is limited certain categories as noted below.

### **Drugs at Risk for Serotonin Syndrome:**

#### **Psychiatric Meds**

amitryptiline (Elavil)  
SSRIs: (Lexapro, Paxil,  
Zoloft, Prozac, Celexa)  
Cymbalta, Effexor  
Wellbutrin, Lithium,  
Tegretol

#### **Neurologic Medications**

Opiates (**all** - hydrocodone,  
oxycodone, methadone etc.)  
Ritalin, Adderal, Methamphetamine  
Headache meds: Imitrex, Maxalt  
Flexeril, possibly other muscle  
relaxers, drugs for Parkinsons

#### **Other Medications**

Linezolid (Zyvox)  
Cocaine, Ecstasy (MDMA)  
Supplements: 5-HTP,  
St Johns Wort,  
Caffeine, tryptophan

Again, this is a **rare** condition and it is very unlikely that you will develop these symptoms. Just be aware of the possibility and be cautious when you increase the dose of a medication or add a new medication, even when directed to do so by your physician. If you suspect this condition, stop your medications and call your doctor or call 911.