



Appendix A: Medications Used in Palliative Care for Depression

Tailor dose to each patient; those who are elderly, cachectic, debilitated or with renal or hepatic dysfunction may require reduced dosages; consult most current product monograph for this information: <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/dhp-mps/prodpharma/databasdon/index-eng.php>

ANTIDEPRESSANTS ^{A, B}						
Generic Name	Trade Name/ Available Dosage Forms	Standard Adult Dose ^C (palliative)	Drug Plan Coverage ^D		Approx. cost per 30 days ^E	Therapeutic Considerations
			Palliative Care	Fair PharmaCare		
NaSSA: Noradrenergic and Specific Serotonergic Antidepressant						
mirtazapine	Remeron[®], G Tab: 15, 30, 45 mg	Start: 7.5 to 15 mg PO at bedtime Goal: 15 to 45 mg PO at bedtime Max: 60 mg ^F PO at bedtime	Yes, LCA	Yes, LCA	\$3–9 (G) \$27–80	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Useful for night-time sedation Rapid dissolve formulation
	Remeron RD[®] ODT: 15, 30, 45 mg		Yes, LCA	Yes, LCA	\$3–9 (G) \$16–47	
SSRI: Selective Serotonin Norepinephrine Reuptake Inhibitors						
venlafaxine XR	Effexor XR[®], G XR caps: 37.5, 75, 150 mg	Start: 37.5 mg PO qAM Goal: 75 to 225 mg PO qAM Max: 375 mg ^F PO daily	Yes, LCA	Yes, LCA	\$11–32 (G) \$64–191	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May cause nausea
duloxetine	Cymbalta[®] Caps: 30 mg, 60 mg	Start: 30 mg PO qAM Goal: 30 to 60 mg PO qAM Max: 120 ^F mg PO qAM	No	No	\$62–127	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective for diabetic neuropathy Should not be given to individuals with chronic hepatic disease or excessive alcohol consumption
desvenlafaxine	Pristiq[®] XR tabs: 50, 100 mg	Start: 50 mg PO once daily Goal: 50 to 100 mg PO once daily Max: 100 mg PO daily	No	No	\$89	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Should not be discontinued abruptly
SSRI: Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors						
citalopram	Celexa[®], G Tab: 10, 20, 40 mg	Start: 10 mg PO qAM Goal: 10 to 40 mg PO qAM Max: 60 mg PO qAM	Yes, LCA	Yes, LCA	\$5–\$8 (G) \$22–45	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Least pharmacokinetic drug interactions
escitalopram	Cipralex[®], G Tab: 10, 20 mg	Start: 5 mg PO qAM Goal: 5 to 20 mg PO qAM Max: 30 mg ^F PO qAM	Yes	Yes	\$6–12 (G) \$29–62	
	ODT: 10, 20 mg		No	No	\$29–62	

ANTIDEPRESSANTS ^{A, B}						
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			Palliative Care	Fair PharmaCare		
TCA: Tricyclic Antidepressants						
desipramine	G Tabs: 10, 25, 50, 75, 100 mg	Start: 10 to 25 mg PO qAM ^G Goal: 50 to 75 mg PO qAM ^G Max: 200 mg PO qAM ^G	Yes, LCA	Yes, LCA	\$22–29 (G)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increase dose every 3 to 7 days until goal reached • may help neuropathic pain • useful for night-time sedation • anticholinergic side effects • desipramine and nortriptyline least anticholinergic of TCAs • monitor for postural hypotension
nortriptyline	Aventyl[®], G Caps: 10, 25 mg	Start: 10 to 25 mg PO at bedtime Goal: 50 to 75 mg PO at bedtime Max: 150 mg PO at bedtime	Yes, LCA	Yes, LCA	\$33–49 (G) \$33–49	

Abbreviations: caps capsules; G generics available; IR immediate release; LCA subject to Low Cost Alternative Program; max maximum dose; ODT oral disintegrating tablet; PO by mouth; qAM every morning; SR sustained release; tabs tablets; XR extended release

^A Refer to guideline and/or algorithm for recommended order of use.

^B Not a complete list of antidepressants

^C Start doses listed are recommended starting doses for geriatric patients (half the recommended doses for adults), except for duloxetine

^D PharmaCare coverage as of October 2016 (subject to revision). Obtain current coverage, eligibility, and coverage information from the online BC PharmaCare Formulary Search page at pharmacareformularysearch.gov.bc.ca

^E Cost as of October 2016 and does not include retail markups or pharmacy fees. Generic and brand name cost separated as indicated by (G).

^F This maximum dose used in palliative care, but not approved for marketing by Health Canada

^G Bedtime dosing may be appropriate for patients experiencing sedation with desipramine

PSYCHOSTIMULANTS ^A						
Generic Name	Trade Name	Available Dosage Forms	Standard Adult Dose (note age specific recommendations)	Drug Plan Coverage ^B		Approx. cost per 30 days ^C
				Palliative Care	Fair PharmaCare	
methylphenidate ^D	Ritalin [®] , G	IR tabs: 5, 10, 20 mg	Age over 65 years: Not recommended Age 18 to 65 years: Start: 5 mg PO bid (AM and noon); use 2.5 mg for frail patients Max: 15 mg PO bid (AM and noon)	Yes, LCA	Yes, LCA	\$6–18 (G) \$14–41
	Biphentin [®]	SR caps: 10, 15, 20, 30 mg	Once dose stabilized on IR, give equivalent daily dose as SR or XR form once daily in AM	No	No	\$23–59
	Concerta [®]	XR tabs: 18, 27, 36, 54 mg		No	Special Authority ^E	\$71–93
	Ritalin-SR [®] , G	SR tabs: 20 mg		No	Yes, LCA	\$9 (G) \$24
dextro-amphetamine ^D	Dexedrine [®] , G	IR tabs: 5	Age over 65 years: Not recommended Age 18 to 65 years: Start: 2.5 mg PO bid (AM then in 4 to 6 h) Max: 20 mg PO bid (AM then in 4 to 6 h)	No	Yes	\$18–134 (G) \$24–188
		SR caps: 10, 15 mg	Once dose stabilized on IR, give equivalent daily dose as SR form once daily in AM	No	Yes	\$33–135
modafinil ^D	Alertec [®] , G	Tabs: 100 mg	Age over 65 years: Start: 100 mg PO qAM Max: 100 mg PO bid (AM and noon)	No	Special Authority ^F , LCA	\$30–60 (G) \$45–90
			Age 18 to 65 years: Start: 100 mg PO bid (AM and noon) Max: 200 mg PO bid (AM and noon)			\$60–120 (G) \$90–180

Abbreviations: caps capsules; G generics; h hours; IR immediate release; LCA subject to Low Cost Alternative Program; max maximum dose; PO by mouth; qAM every morning; SR sustained release; tabs tablets; XR extended release

^A Refer to guideline and/or algorithm for recommended order of use.

^B PharmaCare coverage as of October 2016 (subject to revision). Obtain current coverage, eligibility, and coverage information from the online BC PharmaCare Formulary Search page at pharmacareformularysearch.gov.bc.ca

^C Cost as of October 2016 and does not include retail markups or pharmacy fees. Generic and brand name cost separated as indicated by (G).

^D This indication (i.e. depression) used in practice, but not approved for marketing by Health Canada

^E Special authority required to obtain coverage for Concerta[®] for ADHD as second line treatment

^F Special authority required to obtain coverage for modafinil for patients with narcolepsy