

Medicines Used During a Hospital Stay for Pregnant Women

General Information

During your hospital stay, your health care team's goal is to keep you as comfortable as possible.

The medicines listed here are commonly used to help provide care for you and your unborn baby. Your nurse will help you understand the medicines you are given.

Common Medicines Used

☐ Magnesium sulfate

- **What it is:** a medicine used:
 - to prevent seizures caused by preeclampsia (high blood pressure)
 - to stop premature labor
 - for brain protection in babies born early (premature).
- **How it is given:** by intravenous (IV) line in your hand or arm.
- **Possible side effects:** dizziness, lightheadedness, drowsiness, blurred vision, flushed skin, warm feeling, or nausea (upset stomach) or vomiting (throwing up).

☐ Betamethasone (Celestone® Soluspan®)

- **What it is:** a steroid medicine given to you, before you give birth, to reduce serious problems for your baby who may be born early (premature). These problems include breathing problems after birth, bleeding in the brain or intestinal infections.

- **How it is given:** by intramuscular (into the muscle) injection in the arm or buttocks. You will receive 2 shots 24 hours apart.
- **Possible side effects:** rise in blood pressure or rise in blood glucose, or mood swings (feelings of happiness and sadness).

For Stopping Premature Labor

☐ Nifedipine (Procardia®)

- **What it is:** a medicine that interferes with muscle contractions to stop premature labor.
- **How it is given:** by mouth (pill).
- **Possible side effects:** low blood pressure, headache, fast heartbeat, flushed skin, water retention, dizziness or nausea (upset stomach).

☐ Terbutaline (Brethine®)

- **What it is:** a medicine that relaxes the uterus to stop contractions.
- **How it is given:** by subcutaneous (under the skin) injection in the arm, leg or abdomen.
- **Possible side effects:** racing heartbeat, headache, restlessness or tremors (trembling or shaking in the hands, arms, legs, jaw and face).

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For High Blood Pressure

❑ Labetalol (Trandate®)

- **What it is:** an alpha-beta-blocker that lowers blood pressure.
- **How it is given:** by intravenous (IV) line in your hand or arm.
- **Possible side effects:** drowsiness, dizziness, lightheadedness, nausea (upset stomach), stuffy nose or tingling scalp.

❑ Hydralazine (Apresoline®)

- **What it is:** a medicine that relaxes your blood vessels and lowers your blood pressure.
- **How it is given:** by intravenous (IV) line in your hand or arm.
- **Possible side effects:** diarrhea, headache, loss of appetite, nausea (upset stomach) or vomiting (throwing up), palpitations (racing of the heart), tachycardia (fast heart rate) or angina (chest pain).

❑ Nifedipine (Procardia®)

- **What it is:** a calcium channel blocker that lowers blood pressure.
- **How it is given:** by mouth (pill).
- **Possible side effects:** dizziness, weakness, headache, mild tremors (trembling or shaking in the hands or arms), a warm, tingly feeling, nausea (upset stomach), water retention, low blood pressure or palpitations (racing of the heart).

For Pain

❑ Acetaminophen (Tylenol®)

- **What it is:** an analgesic used to treat mild pain. It also reduces fever.
- **How it is given:** by mouth (pill).
- **Possible side effects:** there are little to no side effects when taken as directed.

For Nausea and Vomiting

❑ Ondansetron (Zofran®)

- **What it is:** a medicine to prevent nausea (upset stomach) and vomiting (throwing up).
- **How it is given:** by intravenous (IV) line in your hand or arm.
- **Possible side effects:** diarrhea, constipation, weakness, headache, dizziness or drowsiness.

❑ Promethazine (Phenergan®)

- **What it is:** a medicine used to prevent nausea (upset stomach) and vomiting (throwing up).
- **How it is given:** by mouth (pill).
- **Possible side effects:** nausea (upset stomach) and vomiting (throwing up), sleepiness or dry mouth.

For Anxiety or to Help You Sleep

❑ Hydroxyzine (Vistaril®)

- **What it is:** an antihistamine used to treat anxiety and allergic conditions.
- **How it is given:** by mouth (pill) or intramuscular (into the muscle) injection in the arm.
- **Possible side effects:** sleepiness, nausea (upset stomach), headache or dry mouth.

For Constipation

❑ Polyethylene Glycol (Miralax®)

- **What it is:** a laxative to relieve constipation.
- **How it is given:** by mouth (powder mixed with a hot or cold beverage such as water, juice coffee or tea).
- **Possible side effects:** diarrhea, flatulence (passing gas), nausea (upset stomach), stomach cramps or a swollen abdomen.

❑ Docusate (Colace®)

- **What it is:** a laxative to relieve constipation.
- **How it is given:** by mouth (pill).
- **Possible side effects:** stomach cramps and diarrhea.

Other Medicine

❑ Prenatal Vitamins

- **What it is:** a dietary supplement that provides extra vitamins and minerals for you and your growing baby.
- **How it is given:** by mouth (pill).
- **Possible side effects:** upset stomach. Prenatal vitamins that have iron may cause constipation.