

Medications may be useful in treating symptoms of pediatric mental health conditions. In most cases medications are used along with evidence based psychosocial treatments. Discuss all medications child's treatment team (doctor, pharmacist, and therapist). Additional resources can be found at www.utahpips.org/upop.

Sleep Medications

Sleep medications may be used for sleep issues including trouble falling asleep, nighttime awaking and nightmares. Many sleep medications prescribed to adults are rarely used in children due to side effects. A full restful night sleep is important so children can manage emotions, behaviors, and stress. Sleep medications must always be used in the context of promoting good sleep practices, also referred to as sleep hygiene.

Most Common Sleep Medication:

- Melatonin
- Trazodone (Desyrel)
- Diphenhydramine (Benadryl)
- Clonidine (Catapres) or guanfacine (Tenex)
- Prazosin (Minipress) – for PTSD related nightmares

Medication Not Recommended for Sleep in Children and Adolescents:

Atypical Antipsychotics: Quetiapine (Seroquel), Aripiprazole (Abilify) or Risperidone (Risperdal)

Sedatives/Hypnotics: Zolpidem (Ambien) Eszopiclone (Lunesta)

Benzodiazepines: Alprazolam (Xanax), Diazepam (Valium), Ativan (Lorazepam), and Klonopin (Clonazepam)

Side effects:

The use of sleep medication can cause excessive drowsiness in the morning and possibly irritability if doses are too high. Although medications such as diphenhydramine and Melatonin are accessible over the counter, age appropriate dosing is recommended. Foster parents should discuss any over the counter medications with the doctor and Fostering Health Children's Nurse. Due to the risk of serious side effects, the use of antipsychotics (Quetiapine) sedative/hypnotics (Zolpidem) or benzodiazepines (Xanax) are not recommended for use in sleep disturbance in children and adolescents.

Monitoring & Safety:

Monitor for excessive tiredness or irritability during the day following the use of sleep medication. Some sleep medications influence blood pressure and heart rate. It is important to attend all doctor visits for heart rate and blood pressure to be monitored. Discuss stopping any sleep medication with the doctor to avoid adverse side effects

Resources:

American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (AACAP):

https://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Families_and_Youth/Facts_for_Families/FFF-Guide/Childrens-Sleep-Problems-034.aspx