



Major Pharmaceutical Drugs and their Side Effects

By Clifford Woods

Just because a drug was tested and has received the go signal for human intake from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), it doesn't mean that it is already free of any possible side effects. On the contrary, the FDA just makes the pharmaceutical company declare what harmful effect their drug has aside from its healing quality.

That being said, a person now seems to have no choice but to risk developing other illnesses, or withstand the side effects of the drug that is supposed to treat an already existing health issue. A good example is the drug Humira.

Humira is an anti-inflammatory, antibody drug that treats several types of arthritis such as rheumatoid arthritis, juvenile idiopathic (*occurring without known cause*) arthritis, and psoriatic arthritis (*a condition that features red patches of skin topped with silvery scales*). It also helps decrease inflammation in cases of ankylosing spondylitis (*a form of progressive arthritis due to chronic inflammation of the joints in the spine*), plaque psoriasis (*characterized by red and scaly skin on the palms of the hands and/or feet*), and hidradenitis suppurativa (*a chronic skin disease characterized by recurrent boil-like lumps (nodules) under the skin*).

However, Humira can lower the amount of blood cells that are responsible for the overall body protection which in turn makes the patient more susceptible to infections. Blood clotting has also been found more difficult for those who are taking it. With those complications, the risk of developing certain types of cancer such as lymphoma (*a form of cancer that affects the immune system*) and melanoma (*a type of skin cancer*) are great. An autoimmune disorder similar to a lupus-like (*is a category for a collection of diverse diseases with similar underlying problems with immunity*) syndrome may also develop.

With those adverse side effects, Humira still managed to be at the top of the 25 best-selling drugs of 2014. Remicade, Enbrel, and Celebrex, all arthritis medications as well, were also included in the top 25. Even with complications such as gaseous stomach, severe headache, swelling of the hands and feet, pain in the groin/calf, and unexplained weight gain, chills and some respiratory issues like sore throat, shortness of breath, chest pain, cough, runny nose and sinus infections, these arthritis medications were still able to convince people of their worth.



Cancer drugs like Rituxan, Avastin, Herceptin, Neulasta, Revlimid, and Gleevec were also topping the top 25 with their claims of significant improvement in the patient's condition. Rituxan, for example, is a cancer medication used to treat non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, and may be used alongside Methotrexate to help with adult rheumatoid arthritis symptoms. As a monoclonal (*derived from a single cell*) antibody, it works by attaching itself to B cells (*also known as B lymphocytes, are a type of white blood cell*) of the immune system and killing it.

While Avastin is a synthetic antibody used to treat several kinds of cancer such as colon, kidney, cervical, ovarian, and rectal cancer. It works by decreasing the blood supply to the tumor while hindering its growth. Herceptin, on the other hand, treats breast cancer and stomach cancer.

The Blood Cancer drugs Neulasta, Revlimid and Gleevec. Neulasta is used to prevent the decrease of white blood cell count during chemotherapy. While Revlimid is used to treat anemia in people with myelodysplastic syndrome (MDS) by lowering the number of red blood cells that are being destroyed naturally by the body. As it helps increase the number of functioning red blood cells, it however makes the patient susceptible to bone marrow complications such as a decrease in the amount of white blood cells and lowering of platelet count.

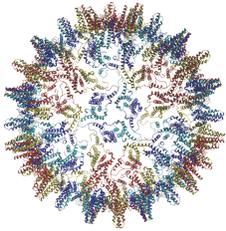


Gleevec treats several types of cancer such as acute lymphoblastic leukemia, chronic myeloid leukemia and myelodysplastic diseases. It works by slowing the growth of cancer cells and by stopping its replication, and ultimately causing the cancer cells to die.

Though these cancer medications sound promising, their side effects seem worrisome. Some of which are infusion reactions, and severe skin and mouth reactions such as sores or skin ulcers, blisters, peeling skin, and even pus-filled blisters. Rituxan may even cause the hepatitis B virus (*a virus that infects the liver*) to be active again in previous hepatitis patients even without showing obvious symptoms of the disease's return.

Heart complications such as chest pain and irregular heartbeat, as well as kidney problems, serious bleeding in the stomach, intestines, and even the brain, are also issues that may arise from these cancer drugs. Other side effects include irritation at the injection site, mouth sores, loss of appetite, severe nausea and vomiting, development of hives, enlargement and

rupture of the spleen, inflammation of skin blood vessels, diarrhea, dry skin, blurred vision, joint pain, muscle pain, and some trouble sleeping.

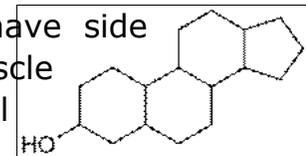


Hepatitis medication Sovaldi is in second place on the top 25 with side effects ranging from insomnia, nausea, decrease appetite, chill, flu-like fever, to joint pain, and when used in combination with Ribavirin, may cause tiredness and headache.

Diabetes medications like Lantus and Januvia are of no exemption as they could trigger irritation, redness, and pain around the area where the drug was injected. A patient may also develop hypoglycemia, have a change in the amount of urine, develop signs of pancreatitis such as nausea, vomiting, loss of appetite, and severe pain in the abdominal area while taking the diabetes drugs.

Lung problems drugs such as Advair and Symbicort causes hoarseness, headache, irritated throat, and may elevate the patient's blood pressure, and could even trigger a sudden worsening of breathing.

Cholesterol controllers such as Crestor and Zetia have side effects such as mild memory problems or confusion, muscle problems, liver problems, severe stomach/abdominal pain, darkening of urine, yellowing of the eyes/skin, and persistent nausea/vomiting.



Known to be an **antipsychotic drug**, Abilify works as a short-term treatment for agitation in patients with schizophrenia and bipolar disorder. It helps decrease hallucinations and could also help improve concentration. However, side effects of Abilify include lightheadedness, excess saliva/drooling, weight gain, constipation, and blurred vision. It may also cause tardive dyskinesia (*a disorder that involves involuntary movements*) that could become permanent and neuroleptic malignant syndrome (NMS) [*a life-threatening neurological disorder*].

On the 16th spot of the top 25 best-selling drugs of 2014 is **Pprevnar**, a drug used as protection from serious infections such as meningitis, pneumonia, and chronic ear infections in children. Its side effects include drowsiness, irritability, loss of appetite, and may sometimes cause numbness, and seizure-like movements.



Next are the **Nervous System Drugs** such as Lyrica, Copaxone, and Avonex. Unfortunately, they also cause swollen arms/legs, constipation, and difficulty in

concentrating as well as chills, joint pains neck pain, and nausea.

Nexium, in the 21st spot is used to treat digestive problems such as acid reflux and ulcers. It is to manage symptoms such as heartburn, persistent cough, and difficulty in breathing too. Side effects of Nexium include abdominal pain, vitamin B-12 deficiency, and the possibility of developing clostridium difficile-associated diarrhea (*difficile infection can range from mild to life-threatening*).



HIV medications such as Atripla and Truvada decrease the virus in the body to help the immune system do its job. However, these drugs are not considered cures for HIV infection, and may cause side effects like lactic acidosis, and liver problems as well as irregular heartbeat, and feeling cold in the areas of the arms and legs.

All those drugs are bestsellers. But they also have quite the side effects. And that's where **natural remedies** come into the picture. Unlike pharmaceutical drugs, **natural remedies** possess little to almost no side effect at all. And they are significantly less expensive than the drugs on the market.

Many online companies specialize in providing **natural remedies** and **supplements** to make life easier and healthier, without the risk of additional complications. Check out the alternatives they offer and see the difference.



The information contained in this article is believed to be reliable. I have taken every precaution to verify its accuracy; I am not a medical professional and make no warranties, representations or guarantees of any kind as to its accuracy. Medical knowledge is in a constant state of change, and what I have written here may be out of date by the time you read it. The information that I have provided here is for informational purposes only and not for use in diagnosing any condition that you may or may not have. Always consult with you doctor before treating yourself.