

Common Childhood Medication Alternatives Chart

Standard treatments, their side effects, and evidence-based alternatives to discuss with your doctor

CONDITION	STANDARD RX	WHAT IT DOES	COMMON SIDE EFFECTS	EVIDENCE-BASED ALTERNATIVES
Ear infection	Amoxicillin	Kills bacteria causing infection	Diarrhea, rash, yeast overgrowth	Watchful waiting (24-48 hrs), warm compress, garlic mullein drops, chiropractic
ADHD	Methylphenidate (Ritalin, Concerta)	Increases dopamine in prefrontal cortex	Appetite loss, sleep disruption, growth suppression, mood changes	Elimination diet (omega-3s (EPA heavy), iron/zinc/magnesium if deficient), neurofeedback, exercise protocol
Anxiety	SSRIs (Zoloft, Lexapro)	Increases serotonin availability	Nausea, headache, emotional blunting, suicidality risk in youth	CBT therapy, magnesium glycinate, exercise, gut-brain interventions, limiting screen time
Allergies (seasonal)	Cetirizine (Zyrtec), loratadine	Blocks histamine receptors	Drowsiness, dry mouth, behavioral changes (Zyrtec withdrawal)	Quercetin, local honey, nasal saline rinse, reduce dust, HEPA filter in bedroom
Reflux (GERD)	PPIs (omeprazole), H2 blockers	Reduces stomach acid production	Nutrient malabsorption (B12, calcium, magnesium),	Smaller/frequent meals, upright posture, eating, elimination diet (dairy/soy trial),

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			increased infection risk	probiotics, DGL licorice
Eczema	Topical steroids, immunomodulators	Suppresses local immune/inflammatory response	Skin thinning, rebound flares, systemic absorption with prolonged use	Elimination diet (dairy, gluten, etc), probiotics, talc-based moisturizers, reduce detergent/fragrance exposure
Sleep issues	Melatonin, clonidine, antihistamines	Promotes sleep onset or sedation	Next-day grogginess, dependency, hormonal effects of long-term melatonin	Sleep hygiene overhaul, blue light elimination, magnesium glycinate, earlier dinner, sensory calming routine

IMPORTANT

This chart is for educational purposes to support informed discussions with your child's doctor. Never start, stop, or change a medication without medical guidance. Alternatives should be discussed with your prescriber.

Many conditions improve when you address root causes: nutrient deficiencies, food sensitivities, sleep quality, gut health, and toxic exposures. Start there before escalating to medication when medically safe to do so.