

Table 21.4 Medications Used to Treat Diabetic Autonomic Neuropathy

Medication	Indications	Dosing	Side effects affecting rehab	Other side effects	Special considerations for rehab
Fludrocortisone acetate (Florinef)	Severely symptomatic orthostatic hypotension	Start at 0.05 mg by mouth twice/day; increase to 0.1 mg by mouth twice/day.	Cog: + S: 0 A: + Motor: ++ D: ++ Com: + F: ++	Fluid retention, insomnia, dizziness, lightheadedness, increased sweating, hyperglycemia, indigestion, psychosis	Used to increase standing blood pressure; increases sodium retention and expands plasma volume. Used if salt tablets and pressure stockings fail to alleviate hypotension.
Sildenafil (Viagra)	Diabetic impotence	50 mg (25 mg in elderly) taken 45-60 min before intercourse. Duration is 4 h.	Cog: + S: 0 A: + Motor: ++ D: ++ Com: + F: ++	Headache, flushing, dyspepsia, dizziness, diarrhea, rash, vision changes	All other causes of impotence must be excluded. Older methods such as vacuum devices or intracavernosal papaverine injections may be tried. Avoid nitrate therapy, which can cause severe hypotension.
Bethanechol (Urecholine)	Neurogenic bladder	10-50 mg 3-4 times/day.	Cog: + S: 0 A: + Motor: +++ D: +++ Com: + F: +++	Malaise, belching, abdominal cramps, colicky pain, diarrhea, increased salivation, urinary urgency, flushing, lacrimation, miosis, hypotension with reflex tachycardia	In cases of neurogenic bladder, encourage voiding every 3-4 h.

Cog = cognition; S = sedation; A = agitation or mania; Motor = discoordination; D = dysphagia; Com = communication; F = falls.

The likelihood rating scale for encountering the side effects is as follows: 0 = Almost no probability of encountering side effects. + = Little likelihood of encountering side effects. +/++ = Low probability of encountering side effects; however, probability increases with increased dosage. ++ = Medium likelihood of encountering side effects. +++ = High likelihood of encountering side effects, particularly with high doses. ++++ = Highest likelihood of encountering side effects; best to avoid in at-risk patients.