

Voice of the Consumer



Slow Shopping Saves Money, Time, and Stress!



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You've probably heard of impulse buying, but have you heard of slow shopping? No, it's not taking hours on a shopping trip, though the concept does have to do with time. The idea behind slow shopping is taking time before you make a purchase, which may mean you buy it later or not at all.

Slow shopping ultimately focuses on giving yourself time to make a purchase, rather than being impulsive with a buying decision and buying something just because you see it right then and there.

Consumers plan to slow-shop this holiday season. In a study by Talker Research for Affirm - and provided exclusively to USA TODAY - nearly 3 in 4 consumers (73%) said they have adopted a slow-shopping approach for the holiday season. Additionally, 3 in 5 consumers (60%) say they're starting earlier, making more frequent, smaller trips, and being mindful of what they buy this year.

When asked why they were slow shopping, consumers pointed to value and intention, said Affirm, a buy now, pay over time provider also known as buy now, pay later.

More than 1 in 2 consumers (53%) say they slow-shop to ensure they're purchasing only items they truly want, and more than 1 in 3 (36%) say it helps them take more time to research their purchases in advance and compare different brands and styles. At the same time, more than half (51%) say they're using slow shopping to take advantage of more deals and promotions.

According to the Talker/Affirm research, nearly 70% of consumers (68%) plan to spend the same or more than they did last year - fully aware of higher costs. More than 1 in 3 (34%) cite inflation as the reason they expect to pay more for the same number of gifts. The National Retail Federation (NRF) recently released its holiday forecast for the season, saying holiday sales are expected to grow 2.5% to 3.5% over last year.

In its latest consumer holiday spending report, out Tuesday, the retail group said consumer holiday spending is expected to reach a record \$902 per person on average across gifts, food, decorations and other seasonal items. That's about \$25 more per person more than last year's figure and \$16 higher than the previous record set in 2019, the NRF said.



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According to the Talker/Affirm research, consumers are using different payment methods for purchases:

- More than half of consumers (55%) prioritize getting the best value by hunting for the best deals.
- Half of consumers (50%) consider 0% APR financing options to be just as, if not more, valuable than traditional discounts.
- More than half of consumers (53%) are using pay over time options to make the cost of a purchase more affordable. The next-most popular reason for that choice is those options help them budget (52%).

Slow-shopping characteristics can vary

Taking the time to slow-shop gives a consumer plenty of time to think through the purchase, assess the value, the ability to afford it and to compare prices, Woroch said.

"It's really just giving you ample time to make the best buying decision and save yourself the most money," she said.

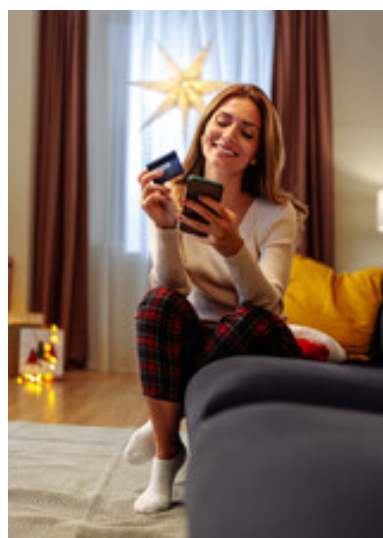
The decision to slow-shop can depend upon the purchase or time of year, Woroch said. For instance, she said, if you're shopping for a new bed, you might take a month to comparison-shop and think about what you want.

Or it could be something you do in the spur of the moment, she said. If you're running into a store for groceries, but you see a shirt that piques your interest, don't pick it up and put it in your cart. Go do your other shopping and think about coming back to it. If you don't, you didn't need it, Woroch said.

Tips to save money with slow shopping

Here are some tips from Woroch to save money while slow shopping:

- Make a budget and stick to it. Set a realistic budget for the holidays, including travel.
- Write out a gift list. Stick to it and talk to friends about limiting gifts.
- Check on price adjustments. If you purchase something, check the store's price adjustment policy. If the price dropped, you might be able to get some money back.
- Layer coupon codes and rewards. Use the extra time to find coupons and free rewards, which may come from signing up for a store email list or mobile alerts. If you've saved rewards from your credit or debit accounts, use them.
- Sign up for free trials, which may include free shipping. Some retailers will offer special membership programs, which offer free shipping for a trial period. Sign up and take advantage of those offers, Woroch said – and don't forget to cancel before the trial is over if you don't want to keep it.



TOP MEDICINES THAT CAUSE HAIR LOSS



Hair loss may occur as a side effect of certain medications that interfere with hair growth or cause hair to shed.¹²

Medications that can cause hair loss include:

- Retinoids
- Antifungals
- Mood stabilizers
- Blood thinners
- Cholesterol-lowering medicines
- Antithyroid medications
- Hormonal medications
- Antihypertensives
- Chemotherapy

Most of the time, the hair loss is reversible, with hair growing back a few months after stopping or reducing the medication.

This article will cover medications that can cause hair loss, why it happens, and tips on preventing, stopping, or reversing this effect.

How Do Medications Cause Hair Loss?

Many commonly prescribed medications can cause temporary hair loss, baldness, and even permanent hair loss.

Medications can affect hair in two ways: by halting hair growth or causing hair to fall out early. Sometimes, both of these things can happen at once.

Hair Loss and Growth: Why Does It Happen?

Each hair strand goes through a cycle of growth, transition, and rest. The growth phase is called anagen and can last from a few months to a few years. During anagen, the hair follicle produces hair continuously. The next phase is a transitional phase. It is called catagen. During this phase, the hair follicle shrinks, and hair growth slows down.

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Telogen effluvium causes the shedding to happen prematurely. It may take one to six months before hair loss is noticeable. This cause of hair loss can be challenging to identify, given the delay between the trigger and the onset of hair loss.

With telogen effluvium, hair loss may not be severe and may not affect much hair. Usually, the hair loss goes away on its own without any treatment.

The resting phase is called telogen and lasts for about 100 days.⁴ During this time, the hair remains anchored inside the follicle. Hair shedding occurs only when the follicle re-enters the anagen phase and produces a new hair shaft.

Types of Medication-Induced Hair Loss

Anagen effluvium is the process in which a medication causes hair loss by halting hair growth. With anagen effluvium, hair loss usually occurs within days or weeks of starting the medicine.

Hair loss can be severe and sudden, affecting a lot of hair at once. Sometimes, hair can be easily plucked out, and it may look different.

Hair loss is usually temporary, but it can take a few weeks for hair to start growing back. Anagen effluvium is commonly associated with anticancer medicines and radiation therapy. Anticancer drugs cause this type of hair loss by damaging hair cells that grow quickly so that they can target fast-growing cancer cells.

When a medication causes hair loss through telogen effluvium, hair sheds excessively. In the human scalp, the telogen phase typically lasts about three months, at the end of which the telogen hair sheds.

Medications That Can Cause Hair Loss

Medications that cause hair loss through telogen effluvium include:

- Retinoids, including acitretin, isotretinoin, and Tazorac (tazarotene)
- Antifungals, including Diflucan (fluconazole) and Vfend (voriconazole)
- Mood stabilizers, including valproate/divalproex, Lithobid (lithium), and Wellbutrin (bupropion)
- Blood thinners, including Jantoven (warfarin) and Heparin injections
- Cholesterol-lowering drugs, including Lopid (gemfibrozil)
- Antithyroid medications, including iodine, thiouracil, and carbimazole
- Hormonal medications, including contraceptives, hormone-replacement therapy for women (estrogen or progesterone), male androgenic hormones, and all forms of testosterone and anabolic steroids
- Antihypertensives (blood pressure lowering drugs) including Tenormin (atenolol), Lopressor (metoprolol), Corgard (nadolol), and Inderal LA (propranolol)

Medications that cause hair loss through anagen effluvium include:

- Chemotherapeutic agents, including doxorubicin, Cytoxan (cyclophosphamide), Trexall (methotrexate), and Hydrea (hydroxyurea)

Retinoids

Retinoids are a class of medicines derived from vitamin A. They help treat certain skin conditions, such as acne. Hair loss is a reported side effect of oral retinoids, such as isotretinoin.

The extent and severity of hair loss usually depend on the dosage and duration of the treatment. If you experience hair loss while taking retinoids, your healthcare provider may adjust your dosage or advise you to stop taking the medication.

Antifungals

Antifungals are prescribed to treat fungal infections. Hair loss takes about three months after starting the medication.

Fortunately, hair loss caused by antifungals is reversible, and complete regrowth can be expected within three to six months after stopping or reducing the dosage.

Some antifungal medications have a lower risk of causing hair loss. In a clinical trial, 82% of people who were off voriconazole, an antifungal, for three months reported that their hair loss had stopped, with regrowth noted in 69%. This included those who had switched to two other antifungal drugs: itraconazole or posaconazole.

Mood Stabilizers

Mood stabilizers are commonly used to treat certain mental health conditions, like depression or bipolar disorder and sometimes epilepsy. Some of these medicines have a higher risk of causing hair loss than others.

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Valproate/divalproex can cause hair loss, which usually becomes noticeable three to six months after starting the medication. The amount of hair loss is directly proportional to the dose. It can also cause other hair-related effects, such as curling, graying, and changing the appearance or texture.

Your healthcare provider may manage hair loss seen with these treatments by lowering your dose, stopping your medication, or recommending complementary hair care support, such as vitamin and mineral supplements.

Hair loss associated with valproate is usually reversible, with hair regrowth happening within two to three months after stopping the medication or reducing the dose.

Other mood stabilizers, such as lithium, selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs), and bupropion may also cause hair loss.

Hair loss with SSRIs and bupropion, although possible, is not as common. If you experience hair loss, your healthcare provider will evaluate the potential benefits of switching to another medication versus the risks of stopping the medication.

Blood Thinners

Depending on the specific drug, around 30% to 40% to up to half of people who take blood thinners (anticoagulants) may experience hair loss. Hair loss is more frequently observed in women than men.¹⁰

After stopping the medication, hair regrowth may take up to three months.¹⁰ The incidence of hair loss with these medications may depend on your dose, age, and duration of treatment.



Blood Pressure Medications

Some blood pressure medications have been known to cause hair loss. These include beta blockers like propranolol and metoprolol. These drugs may cause hair loss or brittleness.

Antithyroid Medications

Medications that treat thyroid disorders may cause hair-related effects, such as hair loss, dryness, or brittleness. However, thyroid conditions can also contribute to hair thinning and shedding, so it might be difficult to know whether the hair loss is due to your medication or the condition.

Chemotherapy

Many people receiving chemotherapy experience hair loss as a common side effect. Hair shedding usually starts within seven to 14 days of the first administration, and hair loss becomes evident one to two months after. In some cases, especially in those who take multiple cycles of chemotherapy, hair loss may be almost complete.

How to Treat Medication-Induced Hair Loss

The step is to identify what's causing your hair loss and consult your healthcare provider before stopping your medication. They can help you find an alternative medication and ensure a safe switch if necessary. Be patient, though, as hair regrowth after discontinuing the medication may take several months.

In some cases, you may not be able to stop the medication causing your hair loss. For this, Rogaine (minoxidil) or Latisse (bimatoprost) may help.

Minoxidil stimulates hair growth and should be used with other treatments. It takes six to 12 months to see results. You must continue using it daily even if you see regrowth.

Bimatoprost is a prescription drug that promotes eyelash growth.

Other treatments for hair loss include:

- Scalp cooling
- Microneedling
- Injections of corticosteroids or platelet-rich plasma
- Laser therapy

Consult your healthcare provider or dermatologist for advice on the best treatment option.

Summary

Hair loss is a common side effect of many medications. It can happen in two ways: by stopping hair growth or causing hair to shed early.

Medications that may cause hair loss include retinoids, blood pressure medications, chemotherapy, and more. Most of the time, the hair loss is reversible, with hair resuming growth a few months after stopping or reducing the medication.

If it is impossible to stop taking the medication causing hair loss, several alternatives may be considered, such as medications for hair growth (e.g., Rogaine) or other methods like scalp cooling.

Reach out to your healthcare provider if you notice increased hair loss when taking a medication. They may lower your dosage or prescribe an option less likely to affect your hair.

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Stay Well During Winter - Mental Health Tips



Winterize Your Workout Routine, Too

Outdoor exercise can help serve up an extra dose of vitamin D (sunlight triggers production of this nutrient), which is important for energy and mood. Getting up and moving is a great way to release those endorphins that cause you to feel great.

And, if you're used to walking, running, and other cardiovascular activities, you may still do so as long as you wear the right gear for cold-weather workouts. Experts suggest wearing three layers to keep you warm: a moisture-wicking polyester layer, an insulating layer, and then a rain and wind-repellent outer-layer. You'll also want to invest in a pair of shoes with proper treading, a pair of gloves, and a winter hat.

Or try out seasonal outdoor exercises (if you live somewhere where it's an option), like ice skating, hiking, or cross-country skiing.

Wondering how you're going to keep your spirits up when the sun sets in the middle of the afternoon and the temperatures are bitter?

Mental health experts say paying more attention to all the little ways we practice self-care (everything you do to stay physically and mentally well) is key.

Think about it. Are you feeling more stressed than usual? Maybe listening to music or a morning jog usually keeps your anxieties at bay. You might find they're not really cutting it these days. You might need to get creative when it comes to what's going to work for you to keep your energy and mood up.

If you're looking for a little inspiration for how to ramp up your self-care routine, here are the top tips from the experts:

Winterize Your Daily Routine

Cold temperatures, brutal winter storms, and the risk of contracting any number of seasonal illnesses may make being more homebound appealing. But you may simultaneously be finding the monotony of an always-in routine brings a stress of its own.

A daily commute or making the decision to stop at your local coffee shop provide mental breaks of their own that make our days feel fuller. No matter what your current daily routine looks like, think about how you can adapt it for the cooler, darker months. If you have the flexibility, take a walk during the middle of the day when it's sunniest.



Keep Your Sleep Schedule Steady

Although shorter days (or even working or learning remotely) can make it tempting to sleep in, staying consistent with your usual bed and wake-up times all year round will help keep energy levels up, mood lifted, and sleep more sound, says Westbrook. Do your best to get a good amount of sleep every night.

In the long term, a night of poor or long sleep here and there likely won't do a great deal of harm. But over time, irregular sleep patterns have been linked with higher risk for hypertension, elevated blood sugar, obesity, and developing heart disease, according to a study published in 2018 Scientific Reports.

Also know that oversleeping is associated with health problems, including depression, headaches, heart disease, and type 2 diabetes, according to Johns Hopkins Medicine. Most adults need between seven and nine hours of sleep each night of the year (no matter the season!), according to the National Sleep Foundation.

Start Your Day with Sunshine

Seasonal affective disorder (SAD, or sometimes called "seasonal depression") is a variant of clinical depression where symptoms emerge and worsen in a seasonal pattern, says Westbrook. It can happen in the summer, too, but it's far more common to show up in the winter months. Many people also experience the far less serious symptoms of the winter blues, characterized by a drop in mood and energy levels in the cold-weather months.

Greet the sun in the morning by opening your blinds whenever possible. Exposure to light in the morning helps keep your body clock aligned with its natural circadian rhythm, keeping you energized throughout the day and regulating the release of melatonin.

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Melatonin is the hormone that signals to your brain it's time to sleep at night. Additionally, increased exposure to sunlight throughout the day may help decrease symptoms of SAD.

Natural daylight raises your serotonin levels, which is one of your body's feel-good chemicals. If you suspect you may have symptoms of clinical depression, talk with your doctor.

Treatment for depression with a seasonal pattern can often include psychotherapy, medication, light therapy, and vitamin D supplementation.

Stay Connected

Social connection is a basic human need. Being around friends and family will help you feel better and may help motivate you to do the things you enjoy. Much research points to the important role of social connectedness plays in supporting mental health.

Be intentional with your social time. Schedule lunches, coffee dates, or phone chats in advance. Or plan a virtual game night with friends or families you can't physically get together with in person.

And, if you don't feel quite up to socializing on a cold winter day? The Anxiety and Depression Institute recommends making an effort to get around other people in other ways, even if it's browsing through a bookstore, or walking through a public place such as a museum.



Lend a Helping Hand

When winter disrupts your mood and plans, you may consider other ways to connect with others, such as volunteering your time. You will feel great knowing you are making a difference to an individual, your community, and the world.

According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), volunteering offers numerous benefits for your mental health, including reduced stress, boosted confidence, and helping you achieve a sense of purpose.

To get started, the national nonprofit group Volunteer Match recommends identifying your passion, then figuring out a time you can carve out of your regular schedule without facing burnout. There are also ways you can volunteer virtually if this is more convenient for you. Consider contacting a nonprofit you're passionate about, a place of worship, or a local shelter as a few starting points.

Engage in Regular Playtime

Play time or adult recess can help mental health during the winter because doing things that bring an individual joy or pleasure have a relaxing effect that counteracts stress and improves mental health. Play releases endorphins, improves brain functionality, and helps keep adults feeling young and energetic.

Research indeed suggests that adults who report making more time for playfulness in their days also report lower levels of perceived stress.

Good options for wintertime play or recess include indoor activities such as dancing, painting, puzzles, or listening to music.

Keep Healthy Snacks (and Sips) on Hand

Feeling cooped up, lonely, stressed, or bored can all be triggers for slipping into unhealthy habits when it comes to snacking or maybe imbibing one drink too many, Westbrook says. Pay attention to what situations leave you most vulnerable to these vices, and keep healthy triggers on hand for those occasions, he suggests.

If you find yourself eating too much junk food on movie night, stock up on some healthy, portion-controlled snacks instead, like fresh fruit, nuts, or vegetables and hummus. If happy hours leave you throwing back a few too many drinks, consider swapping with a cup of herbal tea or a mocktail.

Consider Supplementing With Vitamin D

Vitamin D levels tend to drop in the winter months, when we're spending more time indoors because a major source of vitamin D is sunlight. And given that vitamin D helps with immune function (that means it strengthens the body's defense against viruses and other germs), it's particularly important to make sure you're getting enough once the seasons change.

A meta-analysis published in 2017 in The BMJ found that supplementing with vitamin D was associated with reducing the risk of respiratory infections, especially for people who were vitamin D deficient. Get your vitamin D levels checked. If you're deficient, ask your doctor about taking a vitamin D supplement or a multivitamin that contains it. A daily dose of 600 to 1,000 IU is safe. And consider taking a magnesium supplement, too, which helps regulate vitamin D levels. Approximately 200 milligrams (mg) per day from a supplement is safe.

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Get Your Flu Shot and COVID-19 Booster

Taking care of your mental health can support your physical health, and taking care of your physical health can support mental health. So, take steps to stay healthy and well this winter, like getting your flu shot and recommended COVID-19 vaccines or boosters. Talk to your healthcare provider with any questions.

Feeling sick can certainly dampen a mood, as can needing to isolate from others because of an illness or cancel plans, per Cleveland Clinic. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends everyone ages 6 months and older get the flu shot (with a few exceptions).

And the CDC currently recommends the bivalent COVID-19 booster for everyone ages 5 and older. The agency recommends receiving this booster if it's been at least five months since your last booster or your final dose of the original primary series of shots.

Ask for Help When You Need It

Holiday plans, travel disruptions, and the fear of catching any of the multiple viruses in circulation can be either a minor or major source of stress. Do reach out for help and support in managing your emotions when you need it, whether via a friend, family member, or medical professional, Westbrook recommends. You don't have to struggle with these issues all alone.

And, if you find that possible symptoms of SAD interfere with your daily routine, Schiff recommends talking with a professional about possible therapy, medications, or supplements. Psychotherapy can provide individuals with a new perspective on their situation, which enables them to regain control, reduce physiological and psychological symptoms and adopt effective strategies that will help them deal with stressful situations with more ease and confidence.

Among some of the techniques she finds helpful for her clients include cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) and behavioral activation.

Bottom Line

Keep yourself happy by staying connecting, getting up and moving, and embracing the season's change. This is the time to soak in the slower months and spend time with loved ones.



WHAT TO EXPECT FROM THE NEW PRESIDENT AND CONGRESS



Donald Trump just won the presidency. Here's a brief overview of what is expected to be top of mind for Trump when he is set to be inaugurated on Jan. 20.

NBC News projects that Republicans will control the Senate, giving Trump a clear path in the upper chamber to enact policies and fill key slots in his administration. But the race for the House is still extremely close; Republicans are hoping for a trifecta to control Washington, but a Democratic win could provide a check on Trump's agenda.

Immigration

Trump has said repeatedly that on Day 1, he will "seal" the southern border and launch what he calls "the largest deportation program in American history," invoking the Alien Enemies Act of 1798 — last used during World War II — to help make that happen. Deporting the more than 11 million undocumented immigrants living in the United States would cost the U.S. billions of dollars and require staffing increases to the tune of tens of thousands of people.

As NBC News has reported, his team is also considering withholding federal police grants from local law enforcement agencies that decline to take part in the deportations.

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On the topic of immigration, Trump said he will end “catch and release,” restore “Remain in Mexico” and bring back Title 42, a restriction from his first administration that turns away migrants who arrived illegally and does not allow them to seek asylum, in the name of public health.

Trump said he will also send Congress a bill to ban sanctuary cities. He also intends to ask Congress for funding to hire 10,000 new border agents and approval for a 10% raise for existing agents, as well as a \$10,000 retention and signing bonus.

Trump said he will also ensure federally funded benefits are being used by American citizens – and no one else. He’s also promised, within 24 hours of taking office, to shut down the Department of Homeland Security’s CBP One app, which provides potential immigrants appointment scheduling, remote interview access and the ability to fill out necessary forms.

Trump has announced his intention to seize the assets of criminal gangs and drug cartels in the United States and use those assets to provide compensation for victims of violent crime. He also called for the death penalty for any migrant who comes into the U.S. and kills U.S. citizens or law enforcement officers.

Abortion

On reproductive rights, a central issue in this election, Trump has said he would veto a federal abortion ban but allow each individual state to restrict the procedure as it wishes. In his first term, Trump managed to get three of his conservative nominees confirmed to the Supreme Court; all three of them voted with the majority to overturn *Roe v. Wade*.

In comments that were widely criticized by Democrats, Trump said he would “protect” women, “whether the women like it or not.”

Economy

On the economy, Trump said he will “end inflation” and plans to pass what he calls “historic” tax cuts for workers and small businesses. He said this will include no tax on tips, no tax on overtime, no tax on Social Security benefits and a tax credit for family caregivers who take care of a parent or loved one.

Trump said he will work with tech mogul Elon Musk to eliminate “every single” federal regulation that he says raises prices and kills American jobs. And on the topic of regulations, Trump has promised to end 10 federal regulations for every new one created.

One thing Trump said he will keep in place: the Affordable Care Act, the incredibly popular health insurance marketplace. He has said he will sign an executive order directing every Cabinet secretary and agency head to target inflation as a key priority.

“We will target everything, from car affordability to housing affordability, to insurance costs, to supply chain issues,” Trump said at a rally in North Carolina in August. “I will instruct my Cabinet that I expect results within the first 100 days or much sooner than that.”

Trump has also promised that under his administration, there will be no tax on the first \$10,000 of costs associated with education for parents of children who are homeschooled.

Trump has promised American companies will get “the lowest taxes, the lowest energy costs, the lowest regulatory burdens, and free access to the single best and biggest market on the planet.”

To that point, he wants to lower the corporate tax rate to 15%, from where it is now at 21%, and he has said he will impose a 10%-20% tariff on all imported goods, as well as a tariff of between 100% and 200% on all businesses from countries that don’t want to use U.S. dollars as their reserve currency. This prioritization of “America First” is one that extends to every part of Trump’s platform.

In September, Trump called for reinstating the state and local tax deduction, commonly known as SALT. In 2017, Trump signed the legislation that capped the previously unlimited federal deduction at \$10,000 per filer. The policy hit people in blue states the hardest. Even though Trump signed that measure, he has pledged to undo it.

Environment

For cars made in the United States, Trump said he will make interest on car loans fully tax-deductible. He said he will terminate an electric vehicle rule published by President Joe Biden’s administration in March that makes EVs more available and affordable over the next several years.

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“On Day 1, I will sign a new executive order to cut federal funding for any school pushing critical race theory, transgender insanity, and other inappropriate racial, sexual or political content onto the shoulders of our children,” Trump has said. “And I will not give one penny to any school that has a vaccine mandate or a mask mandate.” Trump said he wants to “get rid” of the Education Department as it currently exists and allow each state to individually “handle education,” as he put it.

“We’ll have one person plus a secretary, and all the person has to do is, ‘Are you teaching English? Are you teaching arithmetic? What are you doing? Reading, writing and arithmetic, and are you not teaching woke?’ Not teaching woke is a very big factor, but we’ll have a very small staff,” Trump said of his plans.

Trump also plans, as he called it, to “keep men out of women’s sports,” and ban gender-affirming care for minors.

Retaliation

In May, Trump became the first former president in history to be convicted of a crime after a New York jury found him guilty on 34 counts of falsifying business records. He continues to face legal jeopardy in federal and state cases, although they will likely be dismissed or delayed now that he has won the election.

It also makes it more difficult for gas-powered cars to keep up with an increasingly stringent Environmental Protection Agency’s standard. Trump also wants to, once again, withdraw from the Paris Agreement, a major international climate treaty.

Without providing a plan as to how he’ll make this happen, Trump has said he will cut consumer energy prices in half within 12 months of taking office.

Foreign policy

On foreign policy, Trump said he will end Russia’s war in Ukraine within a day.

“First, I’ll meet with Putin, I’ll meet with Zelenskyy. They both have weaknesses and they both have strengths,” Trump said in a CNN town hall about the presidents of Russia and Ukraine in 2023. “And within 24 hours that war will be settled. It will be over. It will be absolutely over.”

Trump also plans to stop “the chaos” in the Middle East and prevent “World War III.”

It’s unclear how he’ll go about accomplishing these items. Trump has also expressed interest in building a missile defense shield over the United States, similar to Israel’s Iron Dome.

Culture wars

Trump leaned heavily into anti-transgender rhetoric during his campaign, promising to enact restrictive policies during his administration.

Trump made his belief that he is the victim of political persecution a centerpiece of his campaign, and he frequently promised “ ” for his enemies.

In fact, since he entered the 2024 race, Trump has called for the criminal prosecution of at least 16 rival politicians and 15 law enforcement, military and intelligence officials — according to an NBC News review of his public comments — as well as workers at two federal public health agencies, two billionaires and tech giant Google.

Trump said he believes the sitting and former members of Congress who were part of the committee investigating the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol — including Rep. Jamie Raskin, D-Md., and former Rep. Liz Cheney, R-Wyo. — should be prosecuted for what he calls “their lies” and “treason.”

Trump has repeatedly expressed interest in jailing journalists if they don’t disclose sources who leaked information to them. He also wants anyone who desecrates an American flag to face a one-year jail sentence.





Dementia and Medicine--

What is the link?



Dementia is a growing concern among many aging Americans — especially Alzheimer’s disease. And since treatment options for dementia are limited, prevention is key.

Dementia risk is tied to common things like diabetes, high blood pressure, and physical inactivity. But some common medications are associated with dementia risk, too. Here are four common drug classes linked to dementia, and what the research says about your risk.

Anticholinergic drugs

Anticholinergic drugs block a chemical called acetylcholine in the body. Acetylcholine works like a chemical messenger in the nervous system. It affects learning, memory, movement, and even emotions. And people with Alzheimer’s disease often have low levels of acetylcholine in their bodies.

In one large study of almost 300,000 people, the risk of dementia was significantly higher in those who had taken the highest cumulative doses of strong anticholinergic medications. Another large study in adults over 65 years old confirmed these findings. Other studies have shown that the use of an anticholinergic medication is associated with brain cell death and poor mental functioning.

Some common anticholinergic medications include antihistamines, tricyclic antidepressants, medications for irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), and overactive bladder medications. You may want to take this risk into account if you are deciding whether or not to take these medications.

Antihistamine medications:

- Diphenhydramine (Benadryl, Advil PM, Tylenol PM)
- Chlorpheniramine (Chlor-tab, Aller-Chlor, Coricidin HBP)
- Doxylamine (Unisom)

Tricyclic antidepressants:

- Doxepin (Silenor)
- Nortriptyline (Pamelor)
- Amitriptyline (Elavil)

Irritable bowel syndrome medications:

- Hyoscyamine (Levsin)
- Dicyclomine (Bentyl)

Overactive bladder medications:

- Darifenacin ER (Enablex)
- Oxybutynin (Ditropan)
- Tolterodine (Detrol, Detrol LA)
- Trospium (Sanctura)
- Solifenacin (Vesicare)
- Fesoterodine (Toviaz)

Proton pump inhibitors

Studies suggest that men and women with dementia are more likely to be taking proton pump inhibitors (1.5 and 1.4 times, respectively). This does not necessarily mean that PPIs directly cause dementia — only that there appears to be an association between the two.

There are a couple theories about how these medications could increase dementia risk:

- PPIs have been shown to cause proteins — called β -amyloid plaques — to build up in the brains of mice. This is similar to the way someone’s brain changes with Alzheimer’s.
- Long-term use of PPIs could affect absorption of vitamin B12, which could also increase your risk for dementia.

Proton pump inhibitors:

- Omeprazole (Prilosec)
- Lansoprazole (Prevacid)
- Esomeprazole (Nexium)
- Pantoprazole (Protonix)

Pain medications

Many people are aware that use of opioid pain medications can lead to dependence, overdose, and even death. But in addition to these concerns, studies show that people with heavy, long-term use of opioid medications have a slightly higher risk of getting dementia. Even people taking NSAIDs (non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs) for pain had a high risk of developing dementia.

It’s unclear whether the risk of dementia is related to taking pain medication, to the effects of chronic pain on the brain, or both. One newer study showed that older adults with chronic pain had a higher risk of developing dementia. This study did not measure how many of these adults were taking pain medications, so additional research is needed.

Opioid medications:

- Morphine
- Hydrocodone (Norco)
- Hydromorphone (Dilaudid)
- Fentanyl (Duragesic)

NSAID medications:

- Naproxen (Aleve, Naprosyn)
- Ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil)
- Indomethacin (Indocin)

Voice of the Consumer



Benzodiazepine drugs

Benzodiazepines (benzos) have been linked to dementia – especially in older adults. But not all research supports this link.

Regardless, older adults should be cautious with these drugs. Benzodiazepines can cause many other concerning side effects, including long-term dependence, breathing problems, confusion, drowsiness, problems with cognition, and [even death](#). The risk for impaired brain functioning is increased with higher doses over an extended period of time.

Benzodiazepine medications:

- Lorazepam (Ativan)
- Clonazepam (Klonopin)
- Diazepam (Valium)
- Alprazolam (Xanax, Niravam)

Talk with your healthcare provider if you or a loved one takes these medications. You may be able to take the lowest dose possible and still treat your symptoms.

The Bottom Line

Many drugs have been associated with an increased risk of dementia – especially if you take them for a long time. As with any medication, it is important to weigh the pros and cons to figure out what is best and safest for you and your long-term health.

If you rely on any of these medications to stay healthy, work with your healthcare provider to determine the lowest dose that will still treat your symptoms. This will decrease your risk of any associated side effect, including dementia.



**WISHING YOU
A HAPPY HOLIDAY
SEASON
AND A SAFE AND
HAPPY NEW YEAR!**

HAPPY
Holidays

