# Antitussives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Use</th>
<th>Provide temporary suppression of a nonproductive cough; to reduce viscosity of tenacious secretions</th>
<th>Half-life: Unknown</th>
<th>Onset: 15–30 min</th>
<th>Peaks: 3–6 h</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Example</td>
<td>dextromethorphan hydrobromide (Robitussin DM, Romilar, PediCare, Benylin DM), benzonatate (Tessalon), diphenhydramine (Benadryl); promethazine with dextromethorphan [combination of a phenothiazine and nonnarcotic antitussive]</td>
<td>Route: PO</td>
<td>Pregnancy category: C</td>
<td>Pharmacokinetic: Absorbed in GI tract, metabolized in liver and excreted in urine</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## How it works
- Non-narcotic antitussive suppresses the cough center in the medulla.
- Does not cause physical dependence, tolerance, or depress respirations.

## Adult dose
- **PO:** 10–30 mg q4–8 h; maximum 120 mg/24 h; sustained action 60 mg q12 h.

## Before administration
- Obtain medical history.
- Obtain medication history.
- Assess type, severity, frequency of cough and productions.
- Increase fluid intake and environmental humidity to lower viscosity of lung secretions.

## Administration
- Give without regard to meals.
- Do not crush or break sustained-release capsule. May sprinkle contents on soft food, then swallow without crushing/chewing.

## After administration
- Monitor for side effects.
- Provide a safe environment.
- Initiate deep breathing and coughing exercises, particularly in patient with impaired pulmonary function.
- Assess for clinical improvement and record onset of relief of cough.

## Contraindications
- Don’t administer if the patient has chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, chronic productive cough; hypersensitivity; patients taking MAOIs.
### Antitussives *(continued)*

| Side effects/ adverse reaction | • Nausea, dizziness, drowsiness, sedation.  
|                               | • Hallucinations at high doses. |
| Patient education             | • Avoid alcohol.  
|                               | • Avoid driving or operating machinery until response to drug is known.  
|                               | • Be alert for side effects.  
|                               | • Give without regard to meals.  
|                               | • Perform coughing and deep breathing exercises. |