

AskaPatient Newsletter Special Edition: 2018 Health Care News Roundup

Best and Worst Drugs of 2018

These lists are based on average ratings received in 2018 on the AskaPatient web site. Average ratings listed are for 2018 only, so overall drug rating may be higher or lower. Satisfaction rating score is 1 – 5, with 5 being “best” and 1 being “worst”. Click on drug link to read patient reviews.

TOP 5 RATED DRUGS OF 2018

Rating	Drug Name	Commonly Used for:
4.43	ELMIRON	interstitial cystitis
4.33	PREMARIN	hot flashes
4.22	LAMICTAL	bipolar; epilepsy; seizures
3.30	COMBIPATCH	hot flashes
3.00	MOBIC	pain (NSAID)

WORST 5 RATED DRUGS OF 2018

Rating	Drug Name	Commonly Used for:
1.00	FOSAMAX	osteoporosis
1.00	LEVAQUIN	pneumonia, sinus infection
1.07	COMPAZINE	nausea
1.13	PERIDEX	oral surgery, gum disease
1.15	ZETIA	high cholesterol

News highlights of 2018

In the United States:

- The phenomenon of **sky rocketing prescription drug prices** has occupied national attention this year, with investigations revealing problems throughout the drug manufacturing and distribution supply chain, including unethical corporate practices such as collusion on pricing. New legislation, continued industry monitoring, and competitive cash pricing from pharmacy business "disruptors" like Walmart, may lead to the availability of more cost effective prescription drugs in the U.S. For more information, read these related articles from 2018 on our web site:

<https://www.askapatient.com/news/brand-name-price-spikes-seniors.asp>

<https://www.askapatient.com/news/patient-right-to-know-drug-prices.asp>

<https://www.askapatient.com/news/fda-to-study-drug-importation.asp>

<https://www.askapatient.com/news/generic-drug-price-conspiracy-lawsuit.asp>

- A whopping **59 new drugs** were approved by the FDA in 2018 for conditions including COPD, leukemia, HIV, cystic fibrosis, metastatic non-small cell lung cancer, migraine, and traveler's diarrhea. A new contraceptive ring that prevents pregnancy for a year was also approved. A complete list of the new drugs is available at the FDA web site:

<https://www.fda.gov/Drugs/DevelopmentApprovalProcess/DrugInnovation/ucm592464.htm#top>

Worldwide:

- Drug **manufacturing quality problems** at sites in China and India were brought to the forefront in the summer of 2018. Recalls of affected generic blood pressure drugs containing **valsartan** eventually expanded to affect tens of thousands of patients worldwide. For more information, see article on our web site: <https://www.askapatient.com/news/generic-api-valsartan-worldwide-recall.asp>.

10 Most Popular AskaPatient Weekly Newsletter articles of 2018

A variety of health-related articles that we tweeted about and included in our newsletter caught our readers' attention in 2018. Here are the top ten:

1. The most common supplements have absolutely no impact on health, good or bad, study says. <http://ow.ly/5azH30kdGG1> (05-29-18)

2. Common class of drugs used to treat several illnesses may increase the risk of dementia even 20 years after exposure. <http://ow.ly/leTu30mlGuU> (10-25-18)
 3. Sticking with these five healthy habits adds over a decade to life expectancy, analysis of 123,000 people reveals. <http://ow.ly/fl6K30jLlTR> (05-01-18)
 4. Dietary changes could impact the spread of deadly cancer throughout the body. <http://ow.ly/K7UP30igQQJ> (02-09-18)
 5. Scientists believe they have uncovered the secret to reversing age-related hair loss and wrinkles. <http://ow.ly/KGUo30l3YCe> (07-24-18)
 6. What began as a lawsuit over 2 drugs has exploded into an investigation of 300, involving 16 companies colluding with one another. <http://ow.ly/3llO30mX4zi> (12-12-18) (also see [related article](#) on our web site)
 7. Reducing salt intake does not have any cardiovascular benefit for most people. <http://ow.ly/IS4y30lne8Y> (08-13-18)
 8. Drugs commonly used to treat heart problems and arthritis may cause lung damage, researchers call for better screening. <http://ow.ly/89it30mqbEn> (10-30-18)
 9. Blue light from screens slowly kills our retinas, but its effects aren't limited to our eyes. <http://ow.ly/D3lZ30lluVZ> (08-10-18)
 10. Phone app proves to be nearly as effective as a 12-lead ECG in identifying a heart attack. <http://ow.ly/jDmW30mzZGa> (11-12-18)
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AskaPatient news highlights from this past week, 12/23/2018 – 12/29/2018:

- Researchers investigate the link between gestational diabetes and congenital heart disease, a leading cause of death. <http://ow.ly/3eWz30n64K6> (12-25-18)
- Financial incentive to reduce hospital readmissions leads to more deaths following discharge, study finds. <http://ow.ly/n1nD30n64Kh> (12-25-18)
- Study confirms the common belief that people drink more alcohol in colder and darker climates. <http://ow.ly/MzQu30n64MD> (12-25-18)
- DNA markers in centenarians' blood more closely resemble those of a 20 year-old than a 70 year-old. <http://ow.ly/UK4q30n64NL> (12-25-18)
- Patient helps guide surgeons during brain surgery by playing his guitar. <http://ow.ly/xzdZ30n64P0> (12-26-18)
- Critically ill children on ventilators experience rapid muscle loss, indicating a need for improved nutrition and physical therapy. <http://ow.ly/8tt930n64Qo> (12-26-18)
- CDC announces the start of flu season with Georgia and Colorado seeing high flu rates. <http://ow.ly/GWCD30n6M3U> (12-27-18)
- Many people who need an organ transplant are shocked to find that they must prove they can cover their bills beforehand. <http://ow.ly/fCvJ30n6MdV> (12-27-18)
- New Jersey surgery center is urging thousands of patients to have blood tests because of possible exposure to HIV and hepatitis. <http://ow.ly/aWkQ30n6Mk4> (12-27-18)
- Years of hospital admissions records reveal heart attacks peak during Christmas. <http://ow.ly/ecFx30n6Mm7> (12-27-18)
- High-tech bracelet greatly outperforms similar devices at detecting nighttime seizures then notifying caregivers. <http://ow.ly/AFNk30n6Mvt> (12-28-18)
- Cutting out drinking can help some people quit smoking by slowing down nicotine metabolism. <http://ow.ly/XQWi30n7qhw> (12-28-18)
- Several historically under-studied populations are found to have significant genetic risk for kidney disease. <http://ow.ly/zOoB30n7qpS> (12-28-18)
- Ancient Irish soil, used for its healing properties in folklore, is found to have bacteria that stops superbugs. <http://ow.ly/uujR30n7qzW> (12-

28-18)

- Overindulging in heavy foods at Christmas significantly raises cholesterol, Danish research suggests. <http://ow.ly/tlou30n84Zm> (12-29-18)
- Top Pennsylvania court rules that illegal drug use during pregnancy is not child abuse. <http://ow.ly/yIGu30n850d> (12-29-18)
- Drug used to treat PTSD nightmares could actually make them worse, small study finds. <http://ow.ly/DEVE30n85aJ> (12-29-18)

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