

Best and Worst Rated Drugs of 2019

These lists are based on average ratings* received in 2019 on the AskaPatient web site. Average ratings listed are for 2019 only, so overall drug rating may be higher or lower. Satisfaction rating score is 1 to 5, with 5 being "best" (the medicine cured or helped a great deal) and 1 being "worst" (medicine damaged more than it helped or the patient would not recommend). Click on drug link to read patient reviews.

TOP RATED DRUGS OF 2019

| Rating | Drug Name | Common Use: |
|--------|------------------------------|----------------------|
| 4.0 | WELLBUTRIN | depression |
| 3.8 | COMBIPATCH | hot flashes |
| 3.5 | CHANTIX | quit smoking |
| 3.4 | LAMICTAL | bipolar; seizures |
| 3.3 | ZOLOFT (tie) | depression |
| 3.3 | CIALIS (tie) | erectile dysfunction |

WORST RATED DRUGS OF 2019

| Rating | Drug Name | Common Use: |
|--------|--|------------------|
| 1.0 | DEPO MEDROL | pain |
| 1.1 | LIPITOR (tie) | high cholesterol |
| 1.1 | RISPERDAL (tie) | psychosis |
| 1.1 | PROLIA (tie) | osteoporosis |
| 1.14 | CLINDAMYCIN HCL | antibiotic |
| 1.14 | ROGAINE EXTRA STRENGTH (FOR MEN) | hair loss |
| 1.15 | STRENGTH (FOR MEN) | hair loss |
| 1.26 | PRILOSEC | acid reflux |

*drugs with at least 10 ratings

MOST NUMBER OF "1" (Worst-Rated) DRUGS OF 2019

| # of 1's | Drug Name | Common Use: |
|----------|---------------------------|--------------|
| 48 | FLONASE | allergies |
| 43 | CYMBALTA | depression |
| 35 | PRILOSEC | acid reflux |
| 33 | PROLIA | osteoporosis |
| 26 | SINGULAIR | allergies |

News highlights for 2019

United States:

- The phenomenon of **skyrocketing drug prices** continued to occupy national attention this year, with the Trump administration, federal agencies, state and federal lawmakers, and presidential candidates suggesting new rules

to help make medicines more affordable. Improving price transparency, allowing negotiation of prices by Medicare, and allowing importation of drugs of Canada under certain circumstances are some of the new rules that have been proposed. Each of the proposals have faced strong push-back from industry constituents.

- **CBD oil popularity** continued to surge, as did FDA interest in regulating the safety of these products. In May, the FDA hosted an all-day public hearing: "Scientific Data and Information about Products Containing Cannabis or Cannabis-Derived Compounds." Since then, the FDA has issued warning letters to various companies that they said made unsubstantiated claims about CBD products sold online.

- **Healthcare cybersecurity problems**, including hospital ransomware attacks, data theft and mishandling, and electronic health record vulnerabilities have become increasingly common.

- **Lawsuits against pharmaceutical companies** and **drug distributors** over the **prescription opioid epidemic** were in full swing in 2019, with settlements expected to be in the tens of billions of dollars.

- The FDA strengthened its warning to consumers to stop using **vaping products** containing THC amid more than 1,000 reports of lung injuries—including some resulting in deaths—following the use of vaping products. At the end of 2019, the minimum age for purchase of the products was raised from 18 to 21.

<https://www.fda.gov/tobacco-products/retail-sales-tobacco-products/selling-tobacco-products-retail-stores>

- As of December 27, 2019, **48 new drugs in 2019 had been approved** for conditions including cystic fibrosis, sickle cell anemia, peanut allergies, prostate cancer, migraine, and more. A complete list of the new drugs is available at the FDA web site: <https://www.fda.gov/drugs/new-drugs-fda-cders-new-molecular-entities-and-new-therapeutic-biological-products/novel-drug-approvals-2019>

Worldwide:

- **Drug manufacturing quality problems** at facilities in China and India that were exposed in 2018 continued in 2019. Many versions of over-the-counter and prescription strength heartburn drug **ranitidine** (brand name Zantac) were recalled worldwide for possible contamination with NDMA, the same contaminant found in the Angiotensin II Receptor Blockers (ARB) **blood pressure drugs** valsartan, losartan, and irbesartan.

After running its own tests on samples of heartburn drug Zantac and ranitidine, the FDA found an "unacceptable level" of NDMA carcinogen, although not as high as levels found by Valisure, the independent testing lab that first reported the contaminant.

<https://www.fda.gov/drugs/drug-safety-and-availability/fda-updates-and-press-announcements-ndma-zantac-ranitidine>

For 2019 overview of ARB blood pressure drug recalls, see: <https://www.askapatient.com/news/generic-api-valsartan-worldwide-recall.asp>

10 Most Popular AskaPatient Weekly Newsletter articles of 2019

1. While milk consumption in the U.S. continues to decline, cheese consumption is up. Here is a ranking of cheeses, from healthiest to least healthy, along with recommended cheeses for different health needs.

<https://www.telegram.com/entertainmentlife/20190903/from-feta-to-american-slices-ranking-of-cheeses-by-healthfulness>

2. Swedish study identifies the scientific reason we gain weight as we get older.

<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2019/09/190909193211.htm>

3. A type of blood pressure lowering medication, called a calcium-channel blocker, may be linked with an increased risk of a type of bowel condition called diverticulosis.
<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2019/07/190703121413.htm>
4. Drug companies are competing to develop a treatment for a disease that millions of Americans may not know that they have.
<https://www.cnbc.com/2018/12/21/the-35-billion-race-for-a-cure-for-a-liver-disease-that-affects-millions.html>
5. Consumer Reports looked into the quality of bottled water and found a number of roadblocks and red flags.
<https://www.consumerreports.org/water-quality/looking-for-info-about-bottled-water-quality-good-luck/>
6. Here are some popular web sites for doctor ratings and reviews. We looked at ease of use, cost, conflicts of interest, and caveats.
<https://www.askapatient.com/news/doctor-ratings-sites>
7. Young Oklahoma man tears neck artery and has a stroke from cracking his neck.
<https://www.livescience.com/65399-neck-cracking-stroke.html>
8. The 2019 - 2020 flu season is here! Check out our article on the eight approved 2019 flu shots and one nasal spray along with a summary of what is different this year.
<https://www.askapatient.com/news/flu-vaccines-for-2019-2020.asp>
9. Study suggests that half of commonly taken medications have a profoundly negative effect on the gut microbiome.
https://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2019-10/sh-hoa101519.php
10. It happens unexpectedly: a person long thought lost to the ravages of dementia, unable to recall the events of their lives or even recognize those closest to them, will suddenly wake up and exhibit surprisingly normal behavior, only to pass away shortly thereafter.
<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2019/06/190628182305.htm>

***Next week: a look at new drugs approved in 2019 and new warnings for old drugs.
Best wishes for a happy and healthy new year!***

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