

Canadian Guidelines for the Assessment and Treatment of Anxiety in Older Adults (2024)



Recommended pharmaceutical interventions

Canadian Guidelines recommendations 28 and 30

Medication	Starting dose	Therapeutic dose	Maximum dose	Considerations
First Line (Any of the following)				
Escitalopram	2.5–5mg daily	10–20mg daily	10mg* daily	QTc Prolongation
Citalopram	5–10mg daily	20–30mg daily	20mg* daily	
Sertraline	25–50mg daily	50–200mg daily	200mg daily	Indications in GAD, Panic, SAD
Venlafaxine	37.5mg daily	150–300mg daily	300mg daily	
Second Line				
Duloxetine	30mg daily	60–120mg daily	120mg daily	CYP2D6 inhibitor and substrate, risk for drug–drug interactions
Buspirone	5mg BID to TID	10mg TID	10mg TID	In moderate anxiety, if first line not tolerated

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Pharmaceutical interventions not routinely recommended (except in specific circumstances)

Canadian Guidelines recommendations 29, 31, and 32

Medication	Starting dose	Therapeutic dose	Maximum dose	Considerations
Quetiapine fumarate extended release	50 mg daily	100–200 mg daily	300 mg daily	Poorly tolerated in frail older adults
Quetiapine fumarate	12.5–25 mg once to twice daily	50–100 mg bid	150 mg bid	
Pregabalin	25 mg daily	75–150 mg BID	150 mg bid	Tolerability issues, limited evidence for efficacy
Lorazepam	0.25–0.5mg OD	0.25–0.5mg BID	Not to exceed 2mg daily	Short-term, time-limited
Clonazepam	0.125mg–0.25mg daily	0.125mg–0.25mg BID	Not to exceed 1mg daily	Long-acting. To be avoided in older adults