# How to Study Pharmacology Checklist
## Cheat Sheet

If there's one thing that will make you want to crawl in a corner and cry for the rest of your life, it's pharmacology...

I'll never forget picking up that enormous textbook from the bookstore and thinking: *there's no freaking way in the world I can do this.*

Seriously, that thing is MASSIVE.

So after I gave myself the proper 10 minutes to freak out...

*(Okay, who am I kidding, it was more like half a day...)*

I picked myself back up and got to work.

And it's a good thing I did because guess what I discovered??

You don't need to know everything in your pharmacology textbook.

I know, I know...they say you have to know allllllll the things, right??

Well, they're wrong.

Want to know a secret?

I got straight A's in nursing school and I don't know half the stuff that's in there...I never even read it.

I didn't have to...

Because I came up with a strategy for learning meds that actually works, without spending a gazillion hours studying. I know you're going to rock nursing school this term!

And I'm going to walk you through my pharmacology study process in this step-by-step guide.

All my best,
Christina

p.s. If you want more tips on how to pass your nursing school classes, check out these videos here!

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## HOW TO STUDY PHARMACOLOGY IN NURSING SCHOOL (EASY STEPS):

### Step #1: Make a list of all the meds you need to learn

Go through your lecture notes, clinical paperwork, and any handouts your professor gave you, and make a master list of all the meds you need to know and remember.

I recommend keeping this list in an excel spreadsheet, that way you only have to make this list ONCE, but can always refer back to it.

### Step #2: Categorize all the medications on that list by drug class

There are 2 main types of medication classes

1. Therapeutic
2. Pharmacologic

The therapeutic class is a high-level overview of what the medication does or is used for. You can get a pretty good understanding of what the medication does by just looking at the therapeutic class.

The pharmacologic class dives deeper than that. It categorizes medications based on how the medication acts in the body or it's chemical make-up.

For example, the therapeutic class of Omeprazole (Prilosec) is an antiulcer agent (it prevents ulcers). And its pharmacologic class is a proton-pump inhibitor. By looking at the name "proton-pump inhibitor," you may not realize that it prevents ulcers. But the therapeutic class tells you this.

The pharmacological class can get pretty fancy-pants and a little confusing. But don't worry, you'll have a better understanding of it after going through this guide.

I recommend listing BOTH the therapeutic and pharmacological classes next to each medication. But you will categorize your medications based on the pharmacological class. You can use the therapeutic class for a quick reference if you need.

#### BONUS TIP

A lot of drug names have a similar name structure that tells you what class of drug it belongs to.

For example:

- Most drugs in the Beta Blocker class end in -olol

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- Most drugs in the ACE Inhibitor class end in -pril
- And most drugs that end in -cillin, -mycin, or -oxacin are antibiotics.

It's a pretty niffy pharmacology hack.

And as ANOTHER bonus, I have a free cheat sheet for you to help you easily recognize the medication class a med belongs to. You can check it out here.

### Step #3: Learn the mechanism of action of the drug class

Friend, this is GOLD right here.

You do not need to memorize the mechanism of action for each, and every drug you will ever encounter. That would be crazy-land. Not to mention, near impossible.

You only need to learn the mechanism of action for the class of drugs that the medication belongs to, because all drugs that belong to the same drug class act the same way!

This will cut your study time in (literally) half.

Because instead of memorizing how each and every drug acts in the body, you will only be memorizing how the drug CLASS acts in the body. Because every drug in a drug class will act similar in the body.

Seriously… mind blown.

So now, instead of memorizing 4-6 drugs for each drug class, you only need to learn how the ONE drug class acts, and then you will know how EVERY drug in that drug class acts.

So on your master list of medications, add the mechanism of the drug class.

### Step #4: Connect the side effects, nursing assessment, and nursing considerations back to the mechanism of action

An easy way to do this is to create med cards (or flashcards) for each drug class.

Often times, the side effects, nursing assessment and nursing considerations are closely related to the mechanism of action.

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Here's an example

The medication furosemide (Lasix) is a diuretic, meaning that it kicks out a ton of fluid and electrolytes from the body.

So it's no surprise that when you look at the side effects, many of them have something to do with a loss of fluid and electrolytes: dehydration, hypokalemia, hyponatremia, hypocalcemia, etc…

And then as you make your way to the nursing assessment part, what do you think you'll need to assess for?

Well, signs of dehydration and electrolyte imbalances, of course! :)

Seriously. Amazing.

If you need help making med cards, I walk you through how to do it in this video.

## FINAL THOUGHTS…

Friend, it really IS that simple.

It's not easy, because this process takes time and effort. But it's THAT simple.

Remember...

You know more than you think you do!

Trust yourself and trust the process. And don't give up, no matter what!

You will be an AMAZING nurse. Now go make it happen!

All my best,
Christina