

Medications for Mental Health

A guide for families, friends, board and care
homes, caregivers and patients

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This brochure provides information
about medications in the following categories:

Antidepressants
Antipsychotics
Antianxiety
Antimanic/Bipolar
Extrapyramidal Side Effects (Antipsychotic-Induced)
Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

Ask your doctor what category of medication
or medications you are taking.

ANTIDEPRESSANTS

These medications are to be used only when prescribed by your doctor.

GENERIC NAME	BRAND NAME
SSRI's	
Fluoxetine	Prozac
Fluvoxetine	Luvox
Paroxetine	Paxil
Sertraline	Zoloft
Citalopram	Celexa
Escitalopram	Lexapro
Others	
Bupropion	Wellbutrin
Venlafaxine	Effexor
Mirtazapine	Remeron
Duloxetine	Cymbalta
Vilazodone	Viibryd
Desvenlafaxine	Pristiq
Tricyclics	
Amitriptyline	Elavil
Amoxapine	Asendin
Clomipramine*	Anafranil
Desipramine	Norpramin
Doxepin	Sinequan, Adapin
Imipramine	Tofranil
Maprotiline	Ludiomil
Nortriptyline	Pamelor, Aventyl
Protriptyline	Vivactil
MAO Inhibitors**	
Phenylzine sulfate	Nardil
Tranylcypromine	Parnate
Isocarboxazid	Marplan

*Used mainly in obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD).

**Ask your doctor or pharmacist for the side effects of these medications.

WHAT ARE THEY USED FOR?

Antidepressant medication may be used to treat certain kinds of depression including depressed mood, loss of interest, lack of pleasure, decreased need for sleep and food. These drugs help you come out of the depression and help prevent its recurrence.

WHAT DO THEY DO?

Antidepressants can supply some of the missing chemicals that make you feel well and happy.

SIDE EFFECTS

SSRI's: nausea, diarrhea (sertraline, fluoxetine, venlafaxine, desvenlafaxine), constipation (paroxetine), nervousness, insomnia (fluoxetine, sertraline), somnolence (paroxetine, fluvoxamine), tremor, sexual dysfunction, dry mouth (paroxetine), weight loss, and, rarely, movement disorders such as restlessness, muscle stiffness and trembling.

Bupropion: agitation, anxiety, insomnia, headache, rapid heart rate.

Venlafaxine: nausea, insomnia, dizziness, nervousness, drowsiness, increased blood pressure.

Mirtazapine: drowsiness, increased appetite, weight gain, dizziness.

Duloxetine: nausea, dry mouth, drowsiness, fatigue, insomnia, dizziness.

Tricyclics: dizziness, sleepiness, dry mouth, low blood pressure, blurred vision and constipation may occur. These effects often decrease in 1 to 2 weeks.

PRECAUTIONS

- Benefits of antidepressants are usually not immediate. Noticeable changes usually occur in 1 to 2 weeks. However, full benefits may require a month or more to take effect.
- Avoid barbiturates and alcohol.
- Do not operate a car or machinery if feeling sleepy.
- If you are pregnant or breast feeding, consult your doctor about the risks of using antidepressants.
- Stopping these medications may result in relapse or discontinuation syndrome.

ANTIPSYCHOTICS

These medications are to be used only when prescribed by your doctor.

GENERIC NAME	BRAND NAME
Atypicals or Second Generation	
Clozapine	Clozaril
Risperidone/Risperidone LAI*	Risperdal/Consta
Olanzapine	Zyprexa
Quetiapine	Seroquel
Ziprasidone	Geodon
Aripiprazole	Abilify
lloperidone	Fanapt
Asenapine	Saphris
Paliperidone/Paliperidone LAI*	Invega/Sustenna
Lurasidone	Latuda
Typicals or First Generation	
Chlorpromazine	Thorazine
Fluphenazine/LAI*	Prolixin
Haloperidol/LAI*	Haldol
Loxapine	Loxitane
Mesoridazine	Serentil
Molindone	Moban
Perphenazine	Trilafon
Thioridazine	Mellaril
Trifluoperazine	Stelazine

*Long-acting injectable

WHAT ARE THEY USED FOR?

Antipsychotic medications are used to treat schizophrenia and schizoaffective disorder. These disorders cause distorted thinking, confusion between reality and fantasy, and hallucinations. Antipsychotic medications can reduce or stop these experiences. These medications may also be helpful in treating the manic symptoms of bipolar disorder and conditions such as aggression and agitation.

WHAT DO THEY DO?

Antipsychotic medications treat schizophrenia by helping to create the right balance of brain chemicals that make you feel organized and focused. Antipsychotic medications can help reduce excitability, confusion, and withdrawal. They improve your ability to communicate, to separate reality from fantasy, and decrease hallucinations.

SIDE EFFECTS

Typical Antipsychotics: sleepiness, dry mouth, dizziness, blurred vision, rapid heart beat, stuffy nose, restlessness, muscle stiffness, trembling and shaking of hands may occur. These effects often disappear in 1 to 2 weeks. Tardive dyskinesia (TD), which is an involuntary movement of the face or mouth, may occur and is sometimes irreversible.

Atypical Antipsychotics: These medications may cause some of the same side effects as the typical antipsychotics, but affect muscle rigidity, tremor and restlessness to a lesser degree. TD is rare when taking atypical antipsychotics. In addition to the above side effects, Clozaril can also cause increased sweating, salivation, and requires regular blood draws to monitor a drop in white blood cells. All of the atypical antipsychotics have the potential to cause weight gain and to increase blood sugar, cholesterol, and triglyceride levels. Careful monitoring of these factors as well as dietary changes and exercise is essential.

PRECAUTIONS

- Avoid barbiturates or alcohol if taking these medications; they may increase the side effects of antipsychotics. Avoid operating a car or machinery until you are sure that the medication you are taking does not adversely affect you.
- If you are pregnant, think you may be pregnant, or are breast feeding, consult your doctor or pharmacist about the possible risks of using these medications.
- Do not stop taking these medications or reduce the dose without first discussing it with your doctor.
- Contact your doctor if you experience flu-like symptoms including fever, sore throat, and lethargy (lack of energy).

ANXIOLYTICS (ANTI-ANXIETY)

These medications are to be used only when prescribed by your doctor.

GENERIC NAME	BRAND NAME
Benzodiazepines	
Alprazolam	Xanax*
Clonazepam	Klonopin
Chlorazepate	Tranxene
Chlordiazepoxide	Librium
Diazepam	Valium
Flurazepam	Dalmane**
Lorazepam	Ativan
Oxazepam	Serax
Temazepam	Restoril**
Non-Benzodiazepines	
Buspirone	Buspar
Zolpidem	Ambien**
Zaleplon	Sonata**

*Primarily used for panic disorders.

**Primarily used for sleep disorders.

WHAT ARE THEY USED FOR?

These medications may be used to treat anxiety (an unreasonable and unpleasant state of tension and uneasiness, not ordinary and normal tension), insomnia (difficulty sleeping), tension and sometimes muscle spasms. (Buspirone lacks sedative and muscle relaxant effects.)

WHAT DO THEY DO?

Anti-anxiety medications treat anxiety by supplying some of the missing chemicals that make you feel relaxed and calm. They can provide mild sedation and relief from tension and anxiety.

SIDE EFFECTS

Benzodiazepines: sleepiness, slurred speech, confusion, headaches, nausea, and (rarely) breathing difficulty, nervousness, or excitement may occur.

Non-Benzodiazepines: While taking Ambien or Sonata, headache, drowsiness, dizziness, nausea, or diarrhea may occur. While taking Buspar, headache, insomnia, restlessness, dizziness, or nausea may occur.

PRECAUTIONS

- Avoid taking barbiturates or alcohol while taking anti-anxiety medications. The combination can be deadly.
- Do not operate a car or machinery while taking these medications until you are sure that the medication does not adversely affect you.
- If you are pregnant, think you may be pregnant, or are breast feeding, consult your doctor about the possible risks of using these medications.
- Do not stop taking these medications or reduce the dose without first discussing it with your doctor. (There is no evidence of abuse or dependence with buspirone, zolpidem, or zaleplon.)

MOOD STABILIZERS AND ANTIMANIC/BIPOLAR AGENTS

These medications are to be used only when prescribed by your doctor.

GENERIC NAME	BRAND NAME
Lithium carbonate	Eskalith, Lithobid
Carbamazepine	Tegretol
Valproic acid	Depakene
Divalproex sodium	Depakote
Lamotrigine	Lamictal
Oxcarbazepine	Trileptal

WHAT ARE THEY USED FOR?

These medications may be used to treat bipolar illness:

1. Mania: If you are overly self-confident, reckless, uncontrollable, sleepless and excited.
2. Manic-depression: If you alternate between mania and depression (pessimism, hopelessness, and feelings of uselessness).

WHAT DO THEY DO?

These medications treat mania and depression by adjusting some of the chemicals that make you feel excessively happy and confident. They also help stabilize your moods by controlling your highs and lows. It may take up to 2 weeks for these medications to work.

SIDE EFFECTS

Stomach upset, drowsiness, diarrhea, and weight gain may occur. In addition, lithium may cause thirstiness, excessive urination, muscle weakness, fatigue, tremor, rash, thyroid dysfunction, and slightly impaired memory. Carbamazepine and lamotrigine may cause a rash; if this occurs, it is *very* important that you contact your doctor.

PRECAUTIONS

- If taking lithium, be aware of your salt intake. A low salt concentration in your body can cause fatigue, slurred speech and trembling. In severe cases, coma or death may result.
- Avoid prolonged sun exposure and drink plenty of fluids throughout the entire day.
- Blood tests are necessary while taking lithium, valproic acid, and carbamazepine to ensure that their levels in your blood are safe and effective.
- If you are pregnant, think you may be pregnant, or are breast feeding, consult your doctor or pharmacist about the possible risks associated with these medications.

MEDICATIONS USED TO TREAT EXTRAPYRAMIDAL SIDE EFFECTS (EPSEs)

These medications are to be used only when prescribed by your doctor.

GENERIC NAME	BRAND NAME
Benztropine	Cogentin
Trihexyphenidyl	Artane
Diphenhydramine	Benadryl
Amantadine	Symmetrel

WHAT ARE EXTRAPYRAMIDAL SIDE EFFECTS?

EPSEs can occur from taking antipsychotic medications. Examples of EPSEs include an uncontrollable feeling of restlessness or inability to stay still (akathisia), a feeling of slowing down and stiffness, trembling, and shaking (pseudoparkinsonism), and a feeling of muscle tension or spasm (dystonia).

WHAT DO THESE MEDICATIONS DO?

Medications used to treat EPSEs do so by controlling chemical imbalances caused by certain antipsychotic medications, such as haloperidol and fluphenazine. For a complete list of these medications, see the section on antipsychotics.

SIDE EFFECTS

Benzotropine, trihexyphenidyl, diphenhydramine, and biperiden can cause dry mouth, sedation, dry skin, blurred vision and constipation. Of the medications listed above, benztropine is the most sedating.

Amantadine can cause irritability, tremor, dizziness, agitation and hallucinations (rare).

PRECAUTIONS

- Avoid drinking alcohol with these medications as it may increase sedation. Do not operate a car or machinery until you are sure that the medication does not adversely affect you.
- If you are pregnant, think you may be pregnant, or are breast feeding, consult your doctor or pharmacist about the possible risks associated with these medications.
- High doses of these medications can lead to serious consequences. If you experience flushed face, rapid heart beat, or fever while taking these medications, please contact your physician immediately.

MEDICATIONS FOR ATTENTION DEFICIT HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER (ADHD)

These medications are to be used only when prescribed by your doctor.

GENERIC NAME		BRAND NAME
	Stimulant	
Methylphenidate		Ritalin, Concerta
Dextroamphetamine		Dexedrine
	Nonstimulant	
Atomoxetine		Strattera

WHAT ARE THEY USED FOR?

These medications are used to treat attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

WHAT DO THEY DO?

These medications can improve attention span, decrease distractibility to follow directions, decrease hyperactivity and improve ability to think before acting.

SIDE EFFECTS

Stimulants, Common: trouble falling asleep, headaches, stomach aches, crankiness, rapid pulse, or increased blood pressure. These often go away in 2 weeks or if the dose is lowered by the doctor.

Stimulants, Serious: muscle twitches or tics, sadness which lasts more than a few days, and unusual behavior. Tell your doctor right away if you experience any of these side effects.

Nonstimulants: Potential side effects of atomoxetine include stomach upset, nausea, dizziness, decreased appetite, constipation, sexual dysfunction, and mood instability.

PRECAUTIONS

- Addiction is not seen in young children using this medication as recommended for hyperactivity, but may occur in adolescents or adults using it without proper supervision. For this reason, keep this medication where it will not be abused by others.
- Note:** A child may or may not grow as fast as usual while taking this medication. Growth usually catches up, however, by adulthood. Height and weight should be monitored regularly.

PRESCRIPTION MEDICATIONS FOR MENTAL ILLNESS

WHY?

Prescription medications are helpful in reducing symptoms in people suffering with a mental illness. As with any medication, there are precautions to be taken and careful monitoring is needed to reduce any risk and maximize the benefits. It is important for you and others to be familiar with how these medications are used.

HOW DO MEDICATIONS WORK?

Some mental illnesses are due to chemical imbalances in the brain. These chemicals are neurotransmitters, which are the messengers within the brain that allow communication between different areas of the brain and the body. When there are disturbances in the functioning of these neurotransmitters, the communication system in the brain can be disturbed. Medications can correct some of the imbalances in these chemicals and restore healthy neurotransmitter communication.

HOW ARE MEDICATIONS USED?

Medications are used in two ways:

- They can reduce symptoms of an acute attack.
- They can prevent recurring illness.

TELL YOUR DOCTOR IF YOU:

- Have had allergic reactions to drugs or food.
- Are taking any other medications.
- Are pregnant or breast feeding.
- Have diabetes, kidney, liver or heart disease.
- Are on a special diet or taking any supplements.
- Smoke or drink alcohol.
- Stop taking the prescribed medications.
- Feel the side effects.

REMEMBER:

- Take medications listed here only as prescribed by your doctor.
- Check your prescription.
- Know your medication.
- Follow directions and read the label carefully.
- Store medications in a cool, dry place.
- Keep medications out of the reach of children.
- Never stop medication on your own.
- Ask about special precautions.
- Know about possible side effects.
- Keep your doctor informed.

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS OR PROBLEMS, CALL YOUR:

Doctor:

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Therapist:

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Pharmacist:

Name: _____

Phone: _____

This brochure was:

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