

Neuroleptic Medicine

Neuroleptic Medicine

Neuroleptic medicine is also known as antipsychotic medicine. This medicine helps treat symptoms of mental health conditions such as:

- bipolar mania
- thought problems
- perception problems (not being fully aware of what is happening around you)
- hallucinations (seeing and hearing things that do not exist)
- delusions (having false beliefs)
- sleep problems
- feeling agitated or irritable
- anxiety
- depression
- being unable to manage everyday life.

Neuroleptic medicine changes the balance of brain chemicals (neurotransmitters). These chemicals tell brain cells how to communicate with each other. Dopamine is the main neurotransmitter affected by neuroleptics. Changing the balance of neurotransmitters can help relieve symptoms.

This medicine is part of a treatment plan that includes personal or group psychotherapy.

Medicines commonly prescribed are:

- aripiprazole (Abilify®)
- iloperidone (Fanapt®)
- ziprasidone (Geodon®)
- lurasidone (Latuda®)

- paliperidone (Invega®)
- risperidone (Risperdal®)
- asenapine (Saphris®)
- quetiapine (Seroquel®)
- olanzapine (Zyprexa®).

Other medicines prescribed are:

- amoxapine (Asendin®)
- perphenazine (Etrafon® or Trilafon®)
- haloperidol (Haldol®)
- loxapine (Loxapac® or Loxitane®)
- thiothixene (Navane®)
- fluphenzine (Prolixin®)
- trifluoperazine (Stelazine®)
- chlorpromazine (Thorazine®).

Clozapine (Clozaril®)

If you are taking clozapine, read the information your health care team gives you.

Mild Side Effects

In general, side effects are mild and treatable. Side effects may include the following.

- muscle stiffness, restlessness and tremors (movements you cannot stop)
- tiredness or shakiness
- feeling jittery
- blurry vision
- dry mouth
- upset stomach (nausea)

(over)

- feeling faint, dizzy or lightheaded
- drowsiness (feeling sleepy)
- memory changes
- weight gain or loss
- skin rashes
- constipation (unable to have a bowel movement or having harder stool)
- problems passing urine
- being sensitive to light and sun
- reduced sexual drive
- high blood glucose (sugar)
(Symptoms include increased thirst, urination and appetite.)
- diabetes
- breast swelling or tenderness
- high cholesterol.

Call your health care provider if you have any side effects. There are other medicines your provider can order for you that may be able to reduce or control your side effects.

Severe Side Effects

If you have severe side effects, call your health care provider right away. Severe side effects include:

- **tardive dyskinesia.** This movement disorder affects different parts of the body. In adults it usually affects the tongue or mouth.
 - You may be barely able to notice it.
 - You may have movements of your mouth, tongue, arms, legs, or body from your waist to your neck.
 - You may have trouble swallowing, breathing or both. This is rare.

The disorder goes away in about half of people after they stop taking the medicine. You are at a higher risk for this disorder if you have taken high doses of neuroleptic medicines for a long time.

- **neuroleptic malignant syndrome** (rare). This causes confusion, high fever, unstable blood pressure and pulse, and stiff muscles. This is an emergency. Call 911.

To help prevent severe side effects:

- have regular blood tests at least once a year so your health care provider can check your weight, blood glucose and cholesterol
- avoid being in the sun too long. When you are outside in hot weather, drink a lot of water to prevent getting dehydrated. If you are thirsty, have a dry mouth, are tired and cannot pass urine, call your health care provider right away.

How to Take Neuroleptic Medicine

- Take it as directed.
- Keep it in its original container.
- Take it on schedule.
- Do not skip doses.
- Do not share it with anyone.
- Do not take a different dose without your health care provider's OK.
- Do not stop taking it without your health care provider's OK.
- Stand up slowly from lying or sitting to prevent a drop in your blood pressure.
- Wear sunscreen, hat, sunglasses and proper clothing when in the sun.
- Avoid alcohol or over-the-counter medicines that cause you to become sleepy.
- Do not drive or run machinery until you know how your body reacts to the medicine.

Call your health care provider right away if you have bleeding, bruising, bizarre behavior or thoughts of suicide.

Whom to Contact for More Information

Talk with your health care provider if you have any questions.