



## Typical Antipsychotics

BQIS Fact Sheets provide a general overview on topics important to supporting an individual's health and safety and to improving their quality of life. This document provides general information on the topic and is not intended to replace team assessment, decision-making, or medical advice. This is the second of ten Fact Sheets regarding psychotropic medications.

## Intended Outcomes

Individuals will understand why typical antipsychotics are prescribed, how they work, the range and severity of side effects, how the physician monitors these medicines, and the actions needed to support someone on these medications.

## Definitions

**Typical antipsychotics:** Medications used to decrease psychosis, mania, tics and serious aggressive outbursts. Typical antipsychotics include haloperidol (Haldol), chlorpromazine (Thorazine), fluphenzaine (Prolixin), perphenazine (Trilafon), pimozide (Orap).

**Psychosis:** A symptom or feature of mental illness typically characterized by extreme changes in personality, impaired functioning, and a distorted or confused sense of reality.

**Mania:** An abnormally happy mental state, typically characterized by exaggerated feelings of happiness, lack of inhibitions, racing thoughts, less need for sleep, talkativeness, risk taking, and irritability.

**Insomnia:** A sleep disorder in which it is hard to fall asleep and/or stay asleep.

**Tic:** An involuntary, compulsive, rapid, repetitive, movement or vocalization.

**Abnormal Involuntary Movement Scale (AIMS):** A test to check the face, arms, legs, neck, shoulders, and hips for any abnormal movements.

## Facts

- Typical antipsychotics are available in:
  - Liquid
  - Tablets
  - Immediate and time-released injections (depending on the medication given)



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- These medicines work by decreasing:
  - Psychosis
  - Mania
  - Tics
  - Severe aggressive outbursts
- Common side effects include:
  - Sedation/drowsiness or insomnia
  - Dry mouth
  - Weight gain
  - Sunburn when exposed to the sun
  - Stomach upset
- Occasional side effects (call the physician within one week):
  - Drooling
  - Inability to sit still or restlessness
  - Slowing of movements with a decrease in facial expressions
  - Difficulty with sexual functioning
  - Menstrual cycle irregularities
  - Enlargement of breasts or breast discharge in men or women
- Occasional but serious side effects (call the physician immediately):
  - Stiffness or muscle spasms in the tongue, jaw, or neck
  - Seizures
- Very rare but extremely serious side effects (go to the emergency room immediately):
  - Stiffness, fever, and confusion
  - Stiffness without breathing or swallowing
  - Yellowing of the skin or eyes
  - Brown urine or clay colored stool
  - Recurrent infections or illnesses that do not get better



- How the physician monitors these medicines:
  - Vital signs: pulse rate, temperature, respiration rate, and blood pressure
  - AIMS test to check the face, arms, legs, neck, shoulders, and hips for any abnormal movements
  - Weight and abdominal measurements

### Recommended Actions and Prevention Strategies

1. Give medications as prescribed.
2. Watch for anything different/change in status of the individual and for signs and symptoms of medication side effects.
3. Write down any noted signs and symptoms of medication side effects or changes in status of the individual.
4. Tell your supervisor or nurse about any noted signs and symptoms of medication side effects and changes in status of the individual immediately.
5. Seek medical attention as indicated according to the seriousness of symptoms as listed above.
6. Watch for the effectiveness of medication by writing down target behavior data that relates to the diagnosis.
7. Make sure AIMS is completed and the results of AIMS and other information including weight is presented to physician or psychiatrist during scheduled appointments.



### Learning Assessment

The following questions can be used to verify a person's competency regarding the material contained in this Fact Sheet:

1. Typical antipsychotics are used to decrease:
  - A. Psychosis
  - B. Mania
  - C. Tics
  - D. All of the above
2. Common side effects of typical antipsychotics include all of the following except:
  - A. Weight gain
  - B. Stomach upset
  - C. Seizures
  - D. Sedation
3. Occasional side effects include:
  - A. Weight gain
  - B. Drooling
  - C. Restlessness
  - D. B and C
4. Physician monitoring of typical antipsychotics include:
  - A. Blood sugar
  - B. Abnormal involuntary movements
  - C. Blood count
  - D. Liver function



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5. To help monitor the condition of someone receiving an antipsychotic medication, it is important to do all of the following except:
- A. Watch for any changes in the individual
  - B. Write down observations of possible side effects of medications
  - C. Report to your supervisor how the individual is doing every other month
  - D. Take target behavior and weight notes to medical appointments for the physician or psychiatrist's review

### References

National Alliance on Mental Illness. Mental health medications. Retrieved 08/01/2015 from <https://www.nami.org/Learn-More/Treatment/Mental-Health-Medications>.

U. S. Department of Health & Human Services: Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. (2013). Antipsychotic Medicines for Treating Schizophrenia and Bipolar Disorder: A Review of the Research for Adults and Caregivers. Retrieved 08/01/2015 from <http://effectivehealthcare.ahrq.gov/index.cfm/search-for-guides-reviews-and-reports/?productid=1458&pageaction=displayproduct>.

U. S. National Library of Medicine. Introduction - First- and Second-Generation Antipsychotics. Retrieved 08/01/2015 from <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmedhealth/PMH0040944/>.

### Related Resources

Psychiatric Medication Series Fact Sheets: "Atypical Antipsychotics", "Depakote", "Lithium", "SSRIs and SNRIs", and "Neuroleptic Malignant Syndrome"

### Learning Assessment Answers

- 1. D
- 2. C
- 3. D
- 4. B
- 5. C