

Aripiprazole *(say eh-ruh-pi-pruh-zol)*

What is aripiprazole?

This medicine is a type of antipsychotic (*say an-tee-sy-kot-ick*). It is most commonly used to treat symptoms of psychosis (*say sigh-ko-sis*) such as hearing voices or false beliefs.

Psychosis can happen in different types of illnesses such as schizophrenia and bipolar disorder.

Aripiprazole can also be used to treat other types of illnesses (such as mania or depression) without psychosis.

You are taking this medicine for:

- Schizophrenia
- Bipolar Disorder
- Depression
- Other: _____

How does aripiprazole work?

Schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, and other types of illnesses can happen when the chemicals in your brain are out-of-balance.

Aripiprazole works by restoring the balance of the brain's chemicals. This can help reduce:

- Hallucinations - feeling unusual body sensations; hearing, seeing, smelling or tasting things that are not real.
- Delusions - feeling that someone is following you or trying to hurt you; feeling that people are talking about you; or feeling that you have special powers or are famous.

Aripiprazole can also:

- help improve your mood
- help you sleep better
- help you feel calmer and less fearful
- help you have less harmful thoughts
- help you think more clearly and concentrate better

How quickly will it start working?

Some of what you are experiencing might get better before others.

- Over the first few weeks, you might find that you sleep better and have fewer mood changes.
- Over the next 2 to 8 weeks, hallucinations or delusions fade away and your thoughts become clearer.
- Other symptoms like having no interest in yourself or others might continue to get better over 6 months or more.

How do I take aripiprazole?

- Take aripiprazole regularly as prescribed.
- You can take it with or without food.
- If you miss a dose, take it as soon as possible.
- If it is almost time for your next dose, skip the missed dose and return to your regular schedule.
Do not take 2 doses at the same time.

Why is it important to keep taking it?

- Always take the amount you are supposed to take (the dose written on the prescription label).
Do not change how much you take.
Do not stop taking it without talking to your prescriber.
- If you do not take it as prescribed, the amount of aripiprazole in your body can get too low, making it not work as well to treat your symptoms.

What should I look out for?

Here are some possible side effects and what to do if you notice them.

Common Side Effects



Dizzy

Take your time getting up from a sitting or lying position.

Drink plenty of fluids. Water is best. Limit how much alcohol you drink.



Trouble sleeping

If you have trouble sleeping, you can take your medicine in the morning. Drink less coffee.

Exercise during the day rather than in the evening.



Drowsy

If you feel drowsy during the day, you can take your medicine at bedtime. It is dangerous to drive or use machines when drowsy.



Feeling nervous or agitated

Take your medicine in the morning.

Drink less coffee.

This side effect should improve after 1 to 2 weeks.



Unusual body movements

These are called extrapyramidal (say *extra-per-ah-mid-al*) symptoms.

Let your prescriber know if either of these happen:

- You feel restless, fidgety, or cannot stay still.
- Your hands shake, or your body feels stiff and slow.

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Rare but Serious Side Effects

1. Blood clot

Antipsychotics can increase the chances of blood clots forming.

Early symptoms include swelling, pain, redness, and warmth of one leg.

Serious symptoms include shortness of breath, chest pain, fainting, or weakness to half of your body.

2. Neuroleptic Malignant Syndrome

Antipsychotics can cause this very rare side effect.

Symptoms include a high fever, sweating, fast heartbeat, breathing fast, a change in blood pressure, stiff muscles, and confusion.

When should I get help?

See your prescriber as soon as possible if you notice:

- Your symptoms are getting worse or returning.
- You are feeling hopeless, or you feel that there is no way to solve the problem or end the pain.
- Any of the common side effects do not go away or gets worse.

Go to the nearest Emergency Department if any of these happen:

- You feel like acting on thoughts of harming yourself or others.
- You notice any of the early symptoms of a blood clot.

Call 9-1-1 if you have any signs of the serious side effects.

What else should I know?

- Other medicines can change how aripiprazole works.
- Always check with your prescriber or pharmacist before taking any new medicines, including medicines you get with or without a prescription, herbal medicines, and supplements.

It's good to ask questions

Anytime you have any questions or concerns about taking this medicine, talk with one of your healthcare team.

Call 811 (HealthLinkBC) after hours, and for any other health or medicine advice.

HealthLinkBC is open 24 hours a day and available in 130 languages. For an interpreter, say your language in English. Wait until an interpreter comes on the phone.

This information does not replace the advice given to you by your healthcare provider.