

Typical (first generation) Antipsychotics *(say an-tee-sy-kot-ick)*

What are typical antipsychotics?

These medicines are most commonly used to treat symptoms of psychosis (*say sigh-ko-sis*) such as hearing voices or false beliefs. Psychosis can occur in different types of illnesses such as schizophrenia and bipolar disorder.

You are taking this medicine for:

- ☐ Schizophrenia
- ☐ Bipolar Disorder
- ☐ Other: _____

You are taking:

- ☐ Chlorpromazine (*say: klawr-prom-uh-zeen*)
- ☐ Flupentixol (*say: flew-pen-ticks-ol*)
- ☐ Fluphenazine (*say: flew-fen-uh-zeen*)
- ☐ Haloperidol (*say: ha-luh-peh-ru-dal*)
- ☐ Loxapine (*say: lox-a-peen*)
- ☐ Methotrimeprazine (*say: meth-oh-try-mep-ruh-zeen*)
- ☐ Perphenazine (*say: per-fen-uh-zeen*)
- ☐ Promazine (*say: proh-muh-zeen*)
- ☐ Trifluoperazine (*say: try-flew-oh-per-uh-zeen*)
- ☐ Zuclopenthixol (*say: zoo-clo-pen-thick-sol*)
- ☐ Other: _____

How do antipsychotics work?

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

Antipsychotics work by restoring the balance of these chemicals. There are two types of antipsychotic medication: typical (**first generation**) and atypical (**second generation**). They both treat your symptoms, but work slightly differently and might have different side effects. You have been prescribed a **typical (first generation)** antipsychotic.

Taking this medicine 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.

It can also help:

- improve your mood, sleep, and concentration
- reduce the amount of harmful thoughts
- make you feel more calm and less fearful

How quickly will my medicine start working?

Some symptoms might improve before others:

- Over the first few weeks, you might find that you sleep better and have fewer mood swings.
- Over the next 2 to 8 weeks, hallucinations or delusions fade away and your thoughts become clearer.
- Over 6 months or more, other symptoms might continue to get better, such as having little to no interest in yourself or other activities.

How do I take this medicine?

- Take the medicine regularly as prescribed.
- You can take it with or without food.
- If you miss a dose, take it as soon as possible, unless it is almost time for your next dose.
- 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 (the dose) the doctor prescribed.
- Do not change how much you take and do not stop taking this medicine without first talking with your doctor.
- If you do not take the medicine as prescribed, the amount of medicine in your body can get either:
 - too low, reducing how well it treats your symptoms
 - too high, increasing side effects
- It might take a trial of different antipsychotics to find one that works for you. If you don't feel like the medicine you're taking is working, talk with your doctor about trying another type.

What should I look out for?

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

Common Side Effects



Blurred vision

Can happen in the first 1 to 2 weeks and should go away over time.



Weight gain

Choose healthy foods Exercise regularly.
Drink water instead of sugary drinks like pop.



Dizziness

Take your time getting up from a sitting or lying position. Do not stand up too quickly.
Keep well hydrated by drinking fluids. Water is best.
Limit how much alcohol you drink.



Drowsiness

Take this medicine at bedtime to reduce drowsiness during the day. *Caution:* It is dangerous to drive or operate machinery until you know how this medicine affects you.



Dry mouth

Your mouth may feel dry or scratchy. You can drink water or chew sugar-free gum to help with this.



Unusual body movements – called extrapyramidal (say *extra-per-ah-mid- al*) symptoms

Let your doctor know if:

- You feel restless or cannot stay still (called akathisia - say *ak-ah-thee-zee-ah*).
- Your hands shake or your body feels stiff and slow (called Parkinsonism - say *park-in-so-niz-im*).



Too much prolactin

(a hormone normally in your body)

Speak to your doctor or pharmacist if you have:

- irregular periods
- breasts get larger, get painful, or produce milk
- a change in or no interest in sex

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Rare but Serious Side Effects

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, and/or weakness to one half of the body.

Neuroleptic Malignant Syndrome

Any antipsychotic can cause this very rare side effect.

Symptoms include a very high fever, sweating, fast heartbeat, rapid breathing, changes in blood pressure, rigid or stiff muscles, and confusion.

When should I get help?

See your doctor as soon as possible if you notice any of these:

- 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 are getting worse over time.

Go to the nearest Emergency Department right away or call 9-1-1 if any of these happen:

- You feel like acting on thoughts of harming yourself and/or others.
- You notice any of the early symptoms of the rare but serious side effects listed on page 2.

What else should I know?

- Always check with your doctor or pharmacist before taking **any of these** because they can change how this medicine works or cause unwanted side effects:
 - new prescription medicines
 - medicines you buy without a prescription
 - supplements
 - herbal medicines
 - natural health products
- See your doctor regularly to see if this medicine is working for you.
- Keep this medicine in a cool, dry place.
- **Keep all medicines out of reach of children.**

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 8-1-1 (HealthLinkBC) after hours and for any other health 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.