

# **MEDICATIONS FOR MENTAL HEALTH**

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

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June 2004

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This brochure provides information  
about medications in the following categories:

Antidepressants  
Antipsychotics  
Antianxiety  
Antimanic/Bipolar  
Extrapyramidal Reactions (Side Effects)  
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
	<b>Tricyclics</b>	
Amitriptyline		Elavil, Endep
Amoxapine		Asendin
Clomipramine*		Anafranil
Desipramine		Norpramin
Doxepin		Sinequan, Adapin
Imipramine		Tofranil
Maprotiline		Ludiomil
Nortriptyline		Pamelor, Aventyl
Protriptyline		Vivactil
	<b>SSRI's</b>	
Fluoxetine		Prozac
Fluvoxetine		Luvox
Paroxetine		Paxil
Sertraline		Zoloft
Citalopram		Celexa
Escitalopram		Lexapro
	<b>MAO Inhibitors</b>	
Phenylzine sulfate		Nardil
Tranylcypromine		Parnate
Isocarboxazid		Marplan
	<b>Others**</b>	
Bupropion		Wellbutrin
Trazodone		Desyrel
Venlafaxine		Effexor
Mirtazapine		Remeron

\*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

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

**SSRI's:** nausea, diarrhea (sertraline, fluoxetine), 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.

**MAOI's:** orthostatic hypotension, edema, insomnia, agitation, weight gain, sexual dysfunction, drowsiness, blurred vision, dry mouth and constipation may occur.

### PRECAUTIONS

- Benefits of antidepressants are usually not immediate. Noticeable changes usually occur in 1 to 2 weeks. However, full benefits may take 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.

### IF YOU ARE TAKING AN MAO INHIBITOR:

- Do not drink excessive amounts of coffee.
- Do not drink alcohol, especially chianti (red wine).
- Do not eat cheese, sour cream, yogurt or smoked meats.
- Do not eat fava beans, avocados, or bananas.

## ANTIPSYCHOTICS

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

GENERIC NAME		BRAND NAME
	<b>Typicals</b>	
Chlorpromazine		Thorazine
Fluphenazine		Prolixin
Haloperidol		Haldol
Loxapine		Loxitane
Mesoridazine		Serentil
Molindone		Moban
Perphenazine		Trilafon
Thioridazine		Mellaril
Trifluoperazine		Stelazine
	<b>Atypicals</b>	
Clozapine		Clozaril
Risperidone		Risperdal
Olanzapine		Zyprexa
Quetiapine		Seroquel
Ziprasidone		Geodon
Aripiprazole		Abilify

### WHAT ARE THEY USED FOR?

Antipsychotic medications are used to treat schizophrenia. This disease causes distorted thinking, confusion between reality and fantasy, and hallucinations. Antipsychotic medications can reduce or stop these experiences. These antipsychotic medications may also be helpful in treating the manic symptoms of bipolar disorder.

### WHAT DO THEY DO?

Antipsychotic medications treat schizophrenia by helping to create the right balance of brain chemicals that make you feel organized and concentrated. Antipsychotic medications help reduce excitability, confusion, and withdrawal. They improve your ability to communicate, to separate reality from fantasy and control 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 cause many 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 Clozaril, Zyprexa, low doses of Risperdal, Seroquel, Geodon, and Abilify. In addition to the above side effects, Clozaril can also cause increased sweating, increased salivation, and weight gain. 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 is prudent.

### 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
<b>Benzodiazepines</b>	
Alprazolam	Xanax*
Clonazepam	Klonopin
Chlorazepate	Traxene
Chlordiazepoxide	Librium
Diazepam	Valium
Flurazepam	Dalmane**
Lorazepam	Ativan
Oxazepam	Serax
Temazepam	Restoril**
<b>Non-Benzodiazepines</b>	
Buspirone HCL	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, Lithane
Carbamazepine	Tegretol
Valproic acid	Depakene
Divalproex sodium	Depakote
Lamotrigine	Lamictal

### 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 EXTRAPYRIMIDAL REACTIONS (EPR'S)

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

GENERIC NAME	BRAND NAME
Benzotropine	Cogentin
Trihexyphenidyl	Artane
Diphenhydramine	Benadryl
Biperiden	Akineton
Amantadine	Symmetrel

### WHAT ARE EXTRAPYRIMIDAL REACTIONS (EPR'S)?

EPR's are side effects that can occur from taking antipsychotic medications. Examples of EPR's 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 EPR's 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, benzotropine 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
	<b>Stimulant</b>	
Methylphenidate		Ritalin, Concerta
Pemoline		Cylert
Dextroamphetamine		Dexedrine
	<b>Nonstimulant</b>	
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:

1. They can reduce symptoms of an acute attack.
2. 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:

- Written by Gary L. Viale, PharmD, and Carole Calkins.
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- Originally designed and edited by Kelly Brodetsky and Jerry Fahrni, Students, University of California San Francisco School of Pharmacy.
- Produced by Alliance of the Mentally Ill of Santa Clara County, 408-280-7264 c 1989 - Revised 1996.
- This edition edited and updated in 1999 and 2001 by Mark D. Watanabe, PharmD, PhD, BCPP, and in 2004 by Alice Myong, PharmD, both of Alameda County Behavioral Services, and produced by NAMI East Bay, 510-524-1250.