



1st Step

Information about your medication

■ How does medication help?

The use of medication is an important part of the treatment for psychosis, along with education about the illness for you and your family, group and individual counseling, monitoring of symptoms, family support, and cognitive behavioural therapy.



Canadian Mental
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■ What is the goal of medication?

There are three primary functions to medication in the treatment of psychosis:

- to relieve the symptoms of psychosis;
- to reduce the stress and anxiety these symptoms cause; and
- to prevent further episodes of illness.

There are many different medications available to treat the symptoms of psychosis. These medications are called antipsychotics, also referred to as neuroleptics.

These medications are divided into two categories: typical antipsychotics and the newer atypical antipsychotics.

■ Medications

Typical antipsychotics:

- haloperidol (Haldol), trifluoperazine (Stelazine), perphenazine (Trilafon), and others

Atypical antipsychotics:

- risperidone (Risperdal), olanzapine (Zeprex), quetiapine (Seroquel), clozapine (Clozaril), and others

These medications are equally effective in the treatment of an early episode of psychosis. The atypical antipsychotics are usually tried first because they also treat mood and cognitive impairments and differ in terms of the side effects profile.

■ Side effects

- | | | |
|-----------------------|----------------|----------------------|
| • Tiredness, sedation | • Weight gain | • Sexual dysfunction |
| • Dizziness | • Dry mouth | • Menses change |
| • Blurred vision | • Nausea | • Urinary retention |
| • Increased appetite | • Constipation | |

Some other side effects include restlessness, stiffness, tremors, and involuntary movements. Please let your clinician know when you experience any side effects.

You may experience side effects before you notice the benefits of the medication. This is a sign that the medication is being absorbed into the body and starting to work. Do not stop taking the medication until you check with your psychiatrist or nurse.

Most side effects experienced will diminish over time. Your side effects will be monitored closely and there are a variety of ways to help manage them.

Continue for dosage and duration...



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■ Dosage and duration

Initially, a low dose of antipsychotic will be started and may be gradually increased over time. It may take several weeks for the medication to have its full effect. If the antipsychotic medication does not produce satisfactory results, another antipsychotic can be tried.

It is recommended that you take your medications every day as prescribed, even after your symptoms of psychosis are gone. If you miss a dose, take it as soon as you remember, unless it is close to the next scheduled dose of medication. There are other medications that may also be used to help with other symptoms, such as sleeping difficulties, depression, anxiety, and mood swings.

■ My medication

Medication: _____

Dose: _____

Frequency: _____

Medication: _____

Dose: _____

Frequency: _____

If you have questions about your medications or their side effects, please contact your 1st Step clinician or Sherri Papadedes, Nurse Clinician: 1-844-264-2993 ext. 2061.



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