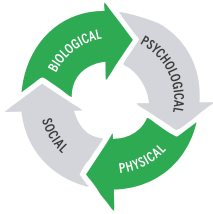


7. Medication therapies

Aripiprazole



There is a lot of money available for research on medications, some of it from pharmaceutical companies and some from independent researchers who are not sponsored by pharmaceutical companies, so there is a lot of research into medications. Remember, more thumbs up just means that more people have done research that shows that this approach does work.

What is it?

Aripiprazole is a medicine that's licensed for adults. It's also licensed for young people aged 15 years or older, and for 13–14 years old if you're experiencing a manic episode (extremely excited). It's available in a tablet, a melt-in-the-mouth tablet, syrup or an injection. The normal amount that you take is 10–15mg, although the maximum amount is up to 30mg.

What does it aim to do?

Aripiprazole can reduce unusual and distressing thoughts and experiences (hearing and seeing things or having strong upsetting beliefs). It also tries to help you if you have slowed movements, slowed thinking or you've lost interest in life.

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE)

NICE recommends Aripiprazole for adults. It didn't report on the effects of Aripiprazole for young people who were experiencing symptoms for the first time and were under 18 because there hasn't yet been very much high quality evidence on this medicine in under-18s.

What are the side-effects of Aripiprazole?

There are no very common side-effects in over-18s, unlike all the other similar medicines.

Aripiprazole has fewer side-effects than all the other medicines but still has more side-effects than if you didn't take anything at all. In under-18s, tiredness, movement and hormone problems are very common.

Less common side-effects (between 1 in 10 and 1 in 100 people) include movement problems, feeling restless and agitated, feeling sick, feeling tired (or having problems sleeping), feeling anxious, dizzy or shaky, having headaches, blurred vision, indigestion, not being able to poo or having too much saliva (spit). Less common side-effects in under-18s also include a drop in blood pressure, being more hungry and having a dry mouth.

Many side-effects are related to the amount of Aripiprazole you take, so they are less likely with low doses, and stop if Aripiprazole is stopped.

“ At the moment I take Aripiprazole which I tolerate well. ”

Katie, 27

How can I get this treatment?

Aripiprazole can only be prescribed by your GP or mental health team. You can't buy it over the counter.

✓ Main pro

People tend to find Aripiprazole easy to take because it has fewer side-effects than other medicines, and people usually feel less tired and flat than on other medicines. Aripiprazole is least likely to make you put on weight or have metabolism changes out of all these medicines.

💬 Aripiprazole has proven beneficial for psychotic symptoms. Aripiprazole is the least sedative and least associated with weight gain, out of all antipsychotics in comparison studies.

Aripiprazole injection is one of the newer antipsychotics available and particularly useful for those who would rather have a monthly injection than take tablets every day. 💬

Dr Richard Whale, EIP Consultant Psychiatrist

✗ Main con

Sometimes people say they feel restless and find it hard to sit still when they're taking higher amounts of Aripiprazole.

💬 When used in treatment of my Bipolar Disorder, Aripiprazole helped reduce symptoms of mania and calmed my elated moods. However, I experienced an unpleasant side-effect of a feeling of inner restlessness that led to me feeling uncomfortable, agitated and stressed for no reason and not being able to relieve this. This was not the right medication for me, however, this side-effect will not be experienced by everyone taking Aripiprazole so it may be the right medication for someone else. 💬

Caleb, 29