

Depot Antipsychotic Medicine

Information for patients and families

Read this information to learn:

- What antipsychotic medicines are
- What depot medicines are
- The pros and cons of depot medicines
- What you can expect



What is antipsychotic medicine?

Antipsychotic medicines treat the symptoms of many psychiatric illnesses such as schizophrenia and bipolar disorder. These medicines help prevent your symptoms from returning.

There are many different types of antipsychotic medicines. Antipsychotic medicine can be given as a pill or with a needle.

What is depot medicine?

Depot medicine is antipsychotic medicine given with a needle. Your doctor might also call it long acting injectable medication or LAI.

Depot medicine releases slowly and stays in your body for a few weeks. Several antipsychotic medicines can be given as depots such as:

- Invega Sustenna (Paliperidone Palmitate)
- Invega Trinza (Paliperidone Palmitate)
- Risperdal Consta (Risperidone)
- Haldol Decanoate (Haloperidol Decanoate)
- Clopixol Depot (Zuclopenthixol Decanoate)
- Fluanxol Depot (Flupentixol Decanoate)
- Abilify Maintena (Aripiprazole Palmitate)

How is depot medicine different from taking a pill?

Depot medicine works like a pill form of the same medicine. The main difference is the way it enters your body.

What are the advantages of depot medicine?

- **You only need to take it between once a week and once a month.**
Pills need to be taken every day to work.
- **You will probably remember to take it.**
Since the nurse or doctor gives you the medicine, they will help remind you to take it. When you don't miss doses you are less likely to get sick.
- **It reduces your symptoms.**
Like the pill form of the medicine, depot medication can reduce symptoms like hearing voices or feeling scared. It can also help you feel calmer and think more clearly.

What are the drawbacks of depot medicine?

- **You will have to get a needle.**
Some people don't like getting needles. Talk with your nurse or doctor about this.
- **You might feel pain at the place where the needle was given.**
This pain is usually mild. It can last up to a couple of days.

- **You might have other side effects.**

Side effects from depot medicines are the same as with the pill form of the same medicine. Some common side effects of antipsychotic medicines are:

- Constipation (trouble going to the bathroom)
- Dizziness
- Dry mouth
- Feeling tired or sleepy
- Headache
- Stiff muscles
- Upset stomach
- Weight gain

Remember: This is not a full list of the side effects. Be sure to talk about side-effects with your doctor.

What happens when the nurse or doctor gives me the needle ?

- The nurse or doctor will give you a needle in your buttock or arm.
- After the needle, the medicine will stay in your body for a few weeks.

How often will I need to get it?

Between once a week and once a month. This depends on the type of medicine you are taking and your treatment plan.

What happens if I miss an injection?

You should have another one as soon as you can. Call your doctor's office to set up an appointment. If you miss a dose for a few weeks or months the medicine will stop working and your symptoms will probably come back.

What if I am not happy with the depot medicine?

If you are not happy with your treatment or are having side effects, it is important to talk about this with your doctor. They may be able to change the dose of your medicine or try another treatment.



Have feedback about this document?

Please fill out our survey. Use this link: surveymonkey.com/r/uhn-pe

Visit www.uhnpatienteducation.ca for more health information. Contact pfep@uhn.ca to request this brochure in a different format, such as large print or electronic formats.

© 2020 University Health Network. All rights reserved. Use this material for your information only. It does not replace advice from your doctor or other health care professional. Do not use this information for diagnosis or treatment. Ask your health care provider for advice about a specific medical condition. You may print 1 copy of this brochure for non-commercial and personal use only.

Form: D-5390 | Author: Jillian Chandler, Michael Neszt, Darcy O'Brien and Sassha Orser | Reviewed: 2024 by Aideen Carroll