How do I care for a child using antipsychotic medicines?

CBH encourages physicians to include you and your child in decisions regarding the use of antipsychotic medications and encourages you to understand why your child is taking medication(s) to help them better manage their condition(s). Helping manage your child's medication may help reduce their symptoms, causing less disruption to their daily life. Working with your child's psychiatrist to understand these medications can improve your child's overall quality of life.

What are antipsychotics?

Antipsychotics are a group of medications that help control and reduce psychosis symptoms. They are often prescribed to address aggression and impulsivity and used as mood stabilizers. Common examples include Abilify, Seroquel and Risperdal.

What side effects can I look out for in my child?

Side effects may vary based on the medication(s) your child is taking! Common ones include dry mouth, dizziness, increased appetite, weight gain, sleepiness, and increased fatigue. Muscle disorders, such as involuntary muscle spasms, are rare but can occur.

How can I help my child to regularly take medications?

Getting a child to take their medication can be challenging, but there are tips that can help:

- Rewarding your child with a point or sticker chart can be a fun way to use positive reinforcement when they take their medications.
- Making it a part of your child's routine by giving them their medication(s) at the same time(s) each day
- Asking your child's doctor if the medication comes in liquid form or if it can be crushed and put into food, such as applesauce
- Explaining why medications can help in an easy-to-understand way that shows the impact on their day-to-day life.

Remember that is this is a team effort between you, as the caregiver, and your child. Talking through medication-related concerns together can decrease the stress of managing your child's mental health condition(s).

What's the role of behavior therapy with antipsychotic treatment?

Children who receive antipsychotic medications for their behavior and/or emotions, should also receive non medication treatment, such as behavior therapy, as part of their treatment. Therapy that helps behavior and emotions can also reduce the need for higher doses or long-term use of antipsychotic medications in children.

CBH Member Services (888-545-2600) can assist families in scheduling appointments.

What can I do to help in my child's care if they were recently hospitalized or transitioned out of a bed-based level of care?

It's important to keep physical copies of your child's discharge records and bring them to their follow-up doctor appointments. You should also ask questions a few days before your child's discharge such as:

- Were there medication changes made during my child's stay?
- Which medications are newly prescribed for my child upon discharge?
- Is there paperwork needed by the pharmacy to fill this new medication? Could that be sent before we leave?
- Who should I contact if I have questions about my child's medication after discharge?

Does my child need blood work done when taking antipsychotic medications?

Yes! Blood work is very important to keep your child safe and ensure the medications are helping. Your child's healthcare team should regularly monitor test results and measurements. Share the table below with your child's doctor to help keep track of how often they should review each item.

	Baseline	4 Weeks	8 Weeks	12 Weeks	Quarterly	Annually	Every 5 Years
Medical History	✓					✓	
Weight (BMI)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Waist Circumference	✓	✓				✓	
Blood Pressure	✓	✓		✓		✓	
Blood Sugar	✓	✓		✓		✓	
Cholesterol	✓	✓		✓			✓

The following table lists local laboratory providers where you can get your child's bloodwork done. We recommend that you call ahead and take note of a laboratory provider's hours of operation to ensure you can walk in without an appointment.

Health Plan	*Laboratory Provider*
Community Behavioral Health	LabCorp | Atlantic Diagnostics
Geisinger Health Plan	LabCorp | Quest Diagnostics | Jefferson Health
Jefferson Health Plans	LabCorp | Quest Diagnostics
Keystone First	LabCorp
PA Health and Wellness	LabCorp | Quest Diagnostics
UnitedHealthcare	LabCorp | Quest Diagnostics

UPMC for You, Inc.	Quest Diagnostics

My child is on too many medications already. How do I know that an antipsychotic medication is really going to help?

Talk to your child's doctor about the need for multiple medications, including the antipsychotic medication. They can discuss options to modify the medication plan to avoid multiple medications and minimize side effects. Like any other drug, antipsychotics can interact with other medications. It's important to help your child keep an updated medication list. This helps the doctor and other healthcare providers identify any potential medication interactions. Some resources to help keep track of medications include:

- Mobile applications like *Medisafe*
- A wallet card can be filled out and brought to each doctor's appointment

What happens if my child stops taking their medications?

Suddenly stopping medications can lead to uncontrolled symptoms associated with mental health conditions and/or psychosis, as well as physical symptoms such as abnormal movements. Eventually, your child's condition may worsen, and they could end up in the hospital.

Can my child skip doses if they are doing better with controlling symptoms?

Talk to your child's doctor before skipping or stopping medications. They can work with you and your child in order to create a medication plan to lower the doses if your child is doing better overall.

CBH Website: Pharmacy Education and Resources for Members
Includes medication wallet card, guides, tip sheets, and other valuable tools and resources to get informed about and properly use medications you may be prescribed

CBH
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CBH Member Services
888.545.2600
cbhphilly.org

988 SUICIDE & CRISIS LIFELINE

You are one phone call away from getting help.

Compassionate, trained professionals answer all calls 24-hours a day, 7 days a week. Callers will receive counseling, guidance, assessment, and referrals/warm transfers to other services as indicated.