

Atypical Antipsychotics & Metabolic Monitoring

What are they?

1. Atypical Antipsychotics (AAPs) are a class of medications used to treat some mental health conditions.
2. They are also called second generation antipsychotic medications (SGAs).
3. The most common ones used in children and youth are:
 - Quetiapine (Seroquel)
 - Risperidone (Risperdal)
 - Olanzapine (Zyprexa)
 - Aripiprazole (Abilify)
 - Ziprasidone (Zeldox)

Why are they used?

In children and youth, these medications may be used to treat symptoms like:

- Aggression
- Behavioural Difficulties
- Mood Instability
- Inability to tell reality from imagination (psychosis)

Research in adults and youth has shown that AAPs reduce the severity of psychotic and manic symptoms.

Research in children with autism has shown that certain AAPs help reduce aggression.

There are only a limited number of symptoms and conditions for which atypicals should be prescribed. For more information, visit: <http://bit.ly/firstdonoharm>

What are possible side effects?

Atypical Antipsychotic treatment may result in side effects. These include:

- High Blood Pressure
- High Blood Sugar
- Weight Gain (especially around the belly)
- High Triglycerides
- High Cholesterol Level
 - High LDL (a type of "bad" cholesterol)
 - Low HDL (a type of "good" cholesterol)

If 3 or more of these side effects occur together, they are called Metabolic Syndrome.

What is the best way to monitor for side effects?

Side effects should be monitored as follows:

- Physical examination:
 - Height
 - Weight
 - Body Mass Index (BMI)
 - Waist Circumference (distance around your waist)
 - Blood Pressure
- Blood Tests (before starting medication, and then at 3, 6, and 12 months after starting medication)

How can you help?

Watch your child for the following symptoms:

- Passing urine more frequently
- Feeling more thirsty than usual
- Feeling tired all the time for no reason

Be sure to tell your health care provider if a family member has a history of diabetes, stroke, heart attack or high blood pressure or cholesterol.

What is the best way to treat & prevent side effects?

Not every child who takes an AAP develops side effects. However, if your child develops side effects from AAPs, there are ways to treat them.

Treatment can include:

- Lifestyle changes
 - Healthy Eating
 - Exercise
 - Quitting Smoking
- Removing or switching AAP medications under the supervision of your physician
- Additional medications for managing high blood sugar, blood pressure, and cholesterol level

Want to learn more?

Mental Health Metabolic Program

<http://kelymentalhealth.ca/partner/provincial-mental-health-metabolic-program> or call (604) 875-2010

Mental Health Information:

www.kelymentalhealth.ca

Medication Information:

www.bcchildrens.ca/psychmeds

General Information About Healthy Eating:

www.healthlinkbc.ca/dietitian or call 8-1-1