

Common Side Effects and Medication Safety

All medications can cause side effects, including psychiatric medications. This leaflet provides general information about common side effects and how medication safety is managed.

Understanding Side Effects

Side effects are:

- Unintended effects of medication
- Often mild and temporary
- Variable between individuals

Not everyone experiences side effects, and many people tolerate medication well.

Common Types of Side Effects

Depending on the medication, side effects may include:

- Nausea or stomach upset
- Headache
- Drowsiness or fatigue
- Dizziness
- Changes in sleep
- Changes in appetite or weight

These effects are often most noticeable when starting medication or adjusting the dose.

Early Side Effects

Early side effects:

- Often occur within the first days or weeks
- May settle as your body adjusts

If early side effects are mild, they are usually monitored rather than requiring immediate change.

When to Seek Medical Advice

You should seek medical advice if you experience:

- Side effects that are severe or distressing
- Side effects that do not improve over time
- New or concerning symptoms

Do not stop medication suddenly unless advised.

Serious or Unusual Side Effects

Serious side effects are uncommon but can occur.

If you experience:

- Severe allergic reactions
- Significant changes in physical health
- Sudden worsening of mental state

seek urgent medical attention.

Medication Safety

Medication safety is supported by:

- Careful prescribing
- Gradual dose adjustments
- Regular follow-up appointments
- Monitoring of physical and mental health

Your psychiatrist considers safety at every stage of treatment.

Interactions with Other Medications

Some medications can interact with:

- Other prescription medicines
- Over-the-counter medications
- Herbal or complementary products

Always inform your psychiatrist about all substances you are taking.

Alcohol and Substance Use

Alcohol and substances can:

- Increase side effects
- Reduce medication effectiveness
- Increase risks

Please discuss alcohol or substance use openly during appointments.

Taking Medication Safely

To reduce risks:

- Take medication exactly as prescribed
- Store medication safely
- Do not share medication with others

If you miss a dose, follow the advice provided by your psychiatrist or pharmacist.

Reporting Side Effects

Side effects are best discussed:

- During follow-up appointments
- In the context of overall treatment response

This allows informed decisions about whether changes are needed.

Questions and Reassurance

It is normal to have questions about side effects.

Open discussion helps balance:

- Benefits of treatment
- Potential risks
- Individual preferences

Medication decisions are reviewed regularly.
