

Aripiprazole (say: 'arry-pip-ra-zole)



What is aripiprazole?

- Aripiprazole (also called Abilify®) is mainly used to help treat the symptoms of psychosis, schizophrenia and mania
- It can also be used to help bipolar depression, depression (with antidepressants), in a crisis and sometimes for agitation that can occur in conditions such as autism
- Aripiprazole is made as tablets, melt-in-the-mouth tablets, a short-acting injection, a syrup and a long-acting injection (Abilify Maintena®).

Please note: Aripiprazole is commonly used in adults but it is not "licensed" or officially approved for people under 15. This is because it has not been fully studied in this younger age group. If you are under 15 you may be offered this medicine because we have experience of it and we know it helps adults. If you wish to know more please ask for a copy of our "Unlicensed uses of licensed medicines" fact sheet.

What does aripiprazole help?

Aripiprazole can help many symptoms. These can include:

- Psychosis (losing touch with reality)
- Hallucinations (seeing or hearing things that aren't there)
- Delusions (thinking something is true when it isn't)
- Aripiprazole can also help mood and other symptoms.



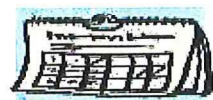
How and when should I take aripiprazole?

- Swallow the tablets with at least half a glass of water whilst sitting or standing. This is to make sure that they reach the stomach and do not stick in your throat
- For the liquid, use a medicine spoon, dropper or oral syringe
- For the melt-in-the-mouth tablets, put them on your tongue and they will dissolve quickly
- Taking it at mealtimes may make it easier for you to remember as there is no problem about taking aripiprazole with or after food
- If the label says to take it once a day this can be morning or evening. It may be best at bedtime if it makes you sleepy.



How long will I have to wait before it works?

- This will depend on what you are taking it for
- The effect usually starts in a week or so, and builds over several weeks.



How long will I need to keep taking aripiprazole for?

- This will depend on what you are taking it for
- It may be for several months or years.

Can I stop taking aripiprazole suddenly?

- It is best not to do this. Talk it over first with other people e.g. relatives and your prescriber or other healthcare professional
- It normally works out better if you stop medication in a planned way at a time when your stress levels are low, rather than e.g. around exam times, mid-winter and life events
- Your symptoms can return if treatment is stopped too early. This may occur some weeks or even months after aripiprazole has been stopped
- When the time comes, you should come off aripiprazole by a gradual reduction in the dose over several weeks.



What should I do if I forget to take a dose of aripiprazole at the right time?

- Take the missed dose as soon as you remember unless it is within about 8-12 hours of your next dose
- If you remember after this time, just take the next dose as normal
- Do not try to catch up by taking two doses at once as you may get more side-effects.







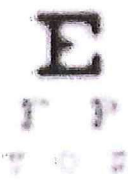
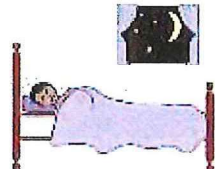

Can I cycle, drive or operate a boat while I am taking aripiprazole?

- You may feel a bit light-headed at first when taking aripiprazole
- Until this wears off, or you know how aripiprazole affects you, be careful cycling and do not drive or operate machines.

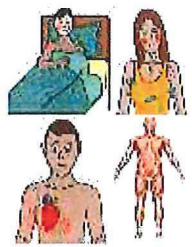



What sort of side-effects might I get with aripiprazole?

Common (fewer than about 1 in 10 people might get these)

 <p>Restlessness (or akathisia)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feeling more on edge. You feel happier when moving around • Try and relax by taking deep breaths • Your prescriber may be able to give you a medicine to help this e.g. an anticholinergic. 	 <p>Constipation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When you want to poop but can't • Make sure you eat enough fibre, cereals or fruit and you drink enough fluid, and keep active • If this does not help, ask your prescriber or pharmacist for a mild laxative.
 <p>Stomach cramps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking it after food may help • It usually wears off in a few weeks • If not, tell your prescriber. 	 <p>Headache</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If your head is painful, paracetamol usually helps.
 <p>Blurred vision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Things look fuzzy, you can't focus your eyes properly • Do not drive until it wears off • See your prescriber if you are worried. 	 <p>Insomnia</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having trouble getting off to sleep or staying asleep • Talk to your prescriber when you next see them • They may be able to adjust the timing of the dose.
 <p>Tremor</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having a shaky hand • It is a well-known side effect but not dangerous • If it is distressing or worries you, tell your prescriber • You may be able to give you a medicine to help it. 	

See your prescriber if you get these rare side effects:

 <p>NMS (Neuroleptic Malignant Syndrome)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fever, sweating, confusion, racing heart, muscle stiffness, difficulty moving • See your doctor straight away if you have had a change in dose or taken other antipsychotics. 	 <p>Become impulsive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Such as big increases in sexual urges, spending, eating or gambling • See your doctor in the next few days.
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This table shows some of the most common side effects and any you might need to take action on. You **must** also see the maker's Patient Information Leaflet for the full list of possible side effects but do not be worried by this. Some side effects are the brain getting used to a medicine and these usually wear off in a few days or weeks. Starting at a lower dose may help. If you think you might have a side effect, you should ask your prescriber, pharmacist or other health professional.

The small print: This leaflet is to help you understand more about aripiprazole. You **must** also read the manufacturer's Patient Information Leaflet (PIL). You may find more on the internet but beware as internet-based information is not always accurate. Do not share medicines with anyone else. The 'Handy charts' will help you compare the main medicines for each condition, how they work and their side effects. Go to our website for fuller answers to these and many other questions.

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