

Use of antipsychotics in children



Antipsychotic medications were developed to help reduce or eliminate the symptoms of psychosis, but today they can be used to treat a variety of conditions in children and adults. The term psychosis is used to describe disorders that affect the mind because it has lost touch with reality. These drugs work by modifying the way information is transmitted between neurons.

Conditions for which a physician suggests the use of antipsychotic medications:

- Schizophrenia and psychosis are caused by schizophrenia.
- Bipolar disorder.
- Developmental disorders, such as Autism, Asperger's Syndrome and other autism spectrum disorders.
- Tourette's Syndrome.
- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).
- Disruptive Behavior Disorders, including Oppositional Defiant Disorder and Conduct Disorder.
- Trastorno bipolar.

Depending on the child's condition, the physician may first suggest another type of medication to treat the condition before starting an antipsychotic. In addition, he or she may indicate non-drug treatments, such as cognitive-behavioral therapy (also known as



Possible side effects of antipsychotic medications in minors:

Antipsychotic medications, like any medication, have potential side effects and health risks. Side effects in children and adolescents may be different than in adults.

Some possible side effects of antipsychotic medications are:

- Weight gain.
- An increased risk of high cholesterol or triglycerides (a type of fat in the blood).
- Hormonal, metabolic, and neurological changes.
- Increased risk of type 2 diabetes.
- Low blood pressure.
- Excessive sleepiness.
- Uncontrollable movements, such as “tics” or tremors.
- Dizziness, headaches and dry mouth.

Keep a record of the side effects observed in the child. Likewise, inform the doctor if they are serious or disappear. It is important to ensure the child's physical and emotional well-being.

Social and Emotional

Like all medications, the goal is to keep the child's symptoms to a minimum, using the lowest possible dose. It may take some time for the doctor to determine which medication (or combination of medications) works best and the dosage he or she will prescribe.

During the diagnosis, the physician in conjunction with other human behavioral professionals, should address other factors in the child's life that could develop problems or worsen mental health. For example, observe the stability and structure in the family, difficulty in accessing health services, support at school, possible problems in peer relationships, among others.



Recomendaciones para los cuidadores:

- Learning about the child's health condition will help you understand better.
- Join a support group to connect with other families facing similar challenges.
- Seek professional help when feeling overwhelmed and exhausted.
- Find healthy ways to channel emotions that may arise in the process.
- Make healthy lifestyle choices that include getting enough sleep, healthy eating and physical activity.



For recommendations, tools and resources on how you and your family can address the emotional and physical concerns that arise during and after the use of antipsychotic medications in minors, please visit your care physician or contact the following phone lines:

Medical Advice Line

1-844-347-7801

TTY/TDD 1-844-347-7804

APS Health

787-641-9133

References:

<https://childmind.org/es/articulo/ninos-y-medicamentos-antipsicoticos/>

<https://www.merckmanuals.com/es-pr/professional/trastornos-psiqui%C3%A1tricos/esquizofrenia-y-trastornos-relacionados/agentes-antipsic%C3%B3ticos>

<https://childmind.org/es/articulo/lo-que-los-padres-deben-saber-sobre-risperdal/>

<https://psicosis.som360.org/es/blog/tratamiento-trastornos-psicoticos-adolescentes>

Prepared by APS Health.

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