

What are they?

- Atypical Antipsychotics (AAPs) are a class of medications used to treat some mental health conditions
- They are also called second generation antipsychotic medications.
- The most common ones used in children and adolescents are:
 - Quetiapine (Seroquel)
 - Risperidone (Risperdal)
 - Olanzapine (Zyprexa)

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 adolescents 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.

What are possible side-effects?

Atypical Antipsychotic treatment may result in side effects

These include:

- Weight Gain (especially around the belly)
- High Blood Sugar
- High Blood Pressure
- High Cholesterol Level
 - High Triglycerides (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 the **Metabolic Syndrome**

What is the best way to monitor for side-effects?

Side-effects should be monitored as follows:

- Physical examination:
 - **height**
 - **weight**
 - **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 high blood pressure or cholesterol, diabetes, strokes, or heart attacks.

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.
- Additional medications for managing high blood sugar, blood pressure, and cholesterol levels

* For more information on treatment and on managing side-effects, please talk to your health care provider.

Want to learn more?

Mental Health Information:

<http://www.bcchildrens.ca/Services/ChildYOUTH/MentalHlth/ProgramsAndServices/ChildPsychInptntUnit/Resources.htm>

Medication Information:

<http://www.bcchildrens.ca/psychmeds>

Dial A Dietitian:

<http://www.dialadietitian.org/>

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Atypical Antipsychotics & Metabolic Monitoring
