

Things to Know About Medication Interactions With Atypical Antipsychotics

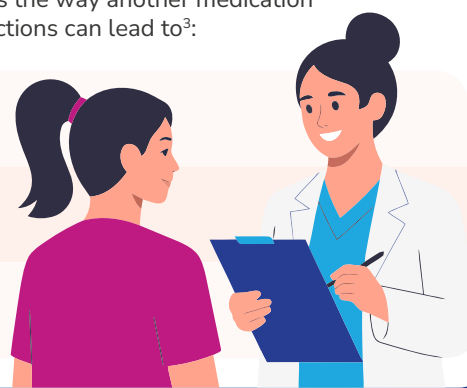
If you are taking an atypical antipsychotic for a mental health condition such as major depressive disorder (MDD), bipolar I disorder (BP-1), or schizophrenia, there are some precautions that can help you use your medication safely. One key precaution is being aware of potential **drug-drug interactions**. These interactions can involve a wide range of medications or substances you might be consuming.¹

Most medication interactions can be managed when your care team is aware of the medications and substances you are taking. Therefore, it is important to let your care team know the full list of medications and substances you use to help them monitor for certain symptoms, adjust doses, or help you avoid combinations that could cause problems.²

What is a drug-drug interaction?

A drug-drug interaction occurs when one medication or substance alters the way another medication is absorbed, metabolized, or works in your body. Drug interactions can lead to³:

- Stronger medication effects, including more side effects or toxic effects
- Weaker medication effects, making treatment less effective
- New or unexpected side effects when medicines, supplements, or substances interact



Why drug interactions matter for people taking atypical antipsychotics

Atypical antipsychotics are often used along with other mental health medicines in conditions such as MDD, BP-1, and schizophrenia. When atypical antipsychotics are combined with certain medications or substances, they can increase the risk of side effects or alter treatment effectiveness, requiring close monitoring, dose adjustments, or changes to treatment plans.¹

Drug interactions can involve a wide range of medications and substances.^{1,4}
Common types of products that can interact with atypical antipsychotics include:

Prescription medicines⁴:

- Antidepressants
- Anxiety or sleep medicines
- Other psychiatric medicines
- Medicines for memory or cognition
- Heart medicines or other drugs that may affect heart rhythm
- Antibiotics
- Blood pressure medications
- Anti-Parkinson's medications

Over-the-counter products⁴:

- Sleep aids
- Pain relievers
- Acid reducers
- Vitamins, supplements, and herbal products

Recreational substances⁵⁻⁷:

- Cannabis/marijuana
- Nicotine/tobacco
- Other recreational drugs



Importance of open communication in helping avoid drug interactions

An important part of helping prevent drug interactions is to make sure every member of your care team, including doctors, psychiatrists, primary care clinicians, pharmacists, therapists, emergency responders, and caregivers, when appropriate, knows the medications and substances you take.²

Keeping a comprehensive and up-to-date medication list can help identify potential drug interactions and inform treatment decisions.²

A medication list should include prescription medicines, nonprescription medicines, vitamins, and supplements, along with key details about how and why they are used.

Review and update the medication list at each visit to ensure it is current, and keep a copy with you in case of emergency.²

A complete medication list should include²:

- Drug name, including:
 - Prescription medications
 - Vitamins, herbals, and supplements
 - Recreational substances, alcohol, nicotine, and cannabis
- Dose/strength
- How often it is taken
- Why it is taken

Symptom watchlist: when to call for help

Monitor for common drug interaction side effects and reach out to your care team if you notice any of the following^{1,8}:



Feeling more sleepy or drowsy than usual



High blood sugar



Fast heartbeat or palpitations



Decreased blood pressure or falls



Changes in the heart's rhythm



Seizure



Side effects such as dry mouth, constipation, blurred vision, trouble urinating, or confusion



Increased weight gain

Tools patients can use to build a medication list

There are free, printable medication list sheets that can help minimize medication errors and adverse drug interactions. Scan below to download a blank medication list that you can fill out and bring to appointments.



My Medicine Record PDF⁹



My Medicines List PDF¹⁰



My Medications List PDF¹¹

Key Takeaways

For patients taking an atypical antipsychotic as part of treatment for a mental health condition, awareness of potential drug interactions is an important part of care. A wide range of medications, food, supplements, and substances can affect how atypical antipsychotics work or increase the risk of side effects.¹

One of the most helpful things you can do is to keep an accurate, up-to-date list of all medications and substances you take and share it with your care team at every visit.²

Remember, your care team is there to support you.

Before you start, stop, or combine any medicine, supplement, or substance, check in with your care team so you can make decisions together.²

References

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