

# Antipsychotic medication: continue, adjust, or stop?

Use this decision aid to help you, your caregiver, and your doctor (prescriber) decide how to best manage your medication. This decision aid is most appropriate for people who take medication for psychosis and for those who have had psychosis for the first time.

Frequently Asked Questions ↓	Continue antipsychotic medications	Adjust antipsychotic medications	Stop antipsychotic medications
<b>What does this involve?</b>	Making no changes to your medications. Please ask your doctor about the effects of continuing to use antipsychotic medications. It is important to work closely with your doctor.	Taking more or less medication, adding or changing if needed. It is best to take the fewest number of medications at the lowest dose that works. Adjusting medication is best done with help from your doctor.	Slowly stopping your medications. This is best done with help from your doctor and may involve learning other ways to manage your symptoms.
<b>What are the benefits?</b>	You can expect things to stay the same. Medications can help you focus less on symptoms and more on the things that are important to you, like work or school.	You may have fewer medication side effects, such as sleepiness, uncontrollable movements and weight gain.	You can avoid medication side effects such as sleepiness, uncontrollable movements and weight gain.
<b>What are the risks?</b>	Common side effects are sleepiness, uncontrollable movements, weight gain, and other effects such as sexual problems. You might not be on the dose or combination of medications that's best for you.	Symptoms may come back on a lower dose, and you may find it hard to work or concentrate. You may need more check-ups with your doctor to make sure that symptoms don't come back.	Your symptoms may get worse if you stop taking medication. Roughly 80 in every 100 people (80%) will have symptoms again in the year after stopping medications. These symptoms may cause you to go back to a hospital or psychiatric community clinic.
<b>How can I lower the risks?</b>	You can try to find ways to limit side effects, such as by eating healthy food, joining patient groups and staying physically active.  Avoid alcohol and street drugs.	Keep track of how you feel and talk with your doctor. You can try support groups, mobile apps, or writing in a journal so that you know if your medications are helping or not. You can ask someone to give you feedback about how you are doing.  Avoid alcohol and street drugs.	Talk regularly with your doctor, a mental health counselor, family members or a friend. Follow the schedule as you lower the medication dose. Don't downplay your symptoms if they come back.  Avoid alcohol and street drugs.
<b>How might this affect my usual activities?</b>	If the medication is helpful, you could get back to your usual activities.	Taking the lowest dose that works will cause fewer side effects. This may help you get back to your usual activities.	Once your symptoms improve, you will be able to go back to your usual activities. However, your symptoms will likely come back at some point. Stay in touch with your doctor.

**Editors:** David Shern (Lead Editor), Glyn Elwyn, Julie Kreyenbuhl, Robert Drake, Patricia Deegan, Lisa Dixon, Anthony Lehman, William Torrey, Manish Mishra, Yaara Zisman-Ilani  
 Editors have declared no conflicts of interest.

**Publication date:** 2016-06-06 **Expiry date:** 2018-06-06 **ISBN:** 978-1-941487-17-4 **License:** CC BY-NC-ND 4.0 (International)

This Option Grid™ decision aid does not constitute medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. See [Terms of Use](#) and [Privacy Policy](#) at [www.optiongrid.org](http://www.optiongrid.org).