

Drug Information: Aripiprazole

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(ay ri pip' ray zole)

Brand name(s): Abilify

Why is this medication prescribed?

Aripiprazole is used to treat schizophrenia. Aripiprazole is in a class of medications called antipsychotics. It works by decreasing abnormal excitement in the brain.

How should this medicine be used?

Aripiprazole comes as a tablet to take by mouth. It is usually taken once a day with or without food. To help you remember to take aripiprazole, take it at around the same time every day. Follow the directions on your prescription label carefully, and ask your doctor or pharmacist to explain any part you do not understand. Take aripiprazole exactly as directed. Do not take more or less of it or take it more often than prescribed by your doctor.

Your doctor may start you on a low dose of aripiprazole and increase your dose after at least 2 weeks. Aripiprazole controls schizophrenia but does not cure it. It may take 2 weeks or longer before you feel the full benefit of aripiprazole. Continue to take aripiprazole even if you feel well. Do not stop taking aripiprazole without talking to your doctor.

Other uses for this medicine

This medication may be prescribed for other uses; ask your doctor or pharmacist for more information.

What special precautions should I follow?

Before taking aripiprazole,

- tell your doctor and pharmacist if you are allergic to aripiprazole or any other medications.
- tell your doctor and pharmacist what prescription and nonprescription medications, vitamins, nutritional supplements, and herbal products you are taking. Be sure to mention any of the following: amiodarone (Cordarone, Pacerone); antidepressants (mood elevators); antifungals such as fluconazole (Diflucan), itraconazole (Sporanox), and ketoconazole (Nizoral); antihistamines; bupropion (Wellbutrin); carbamazepine (Tegretol); celecoxib (Celebrex); chlorpromazine (Thorazine); cimetidine (Tagamet); clarithromycin (Biaxin); clomipramine (Anafranil); cyclosporine (Neoral, Sandimmune); danazol (Danocrine); delavirdine (Rescriptor); dexamethasone (Decadron); diltiazem (Cardizem, Dilacor, Tiazac); doxorubicin (Adriamycin); erythromycin (E.E.S., E-Mycin, Erythrocin); ethosuximide (Zarontin); fluoxetine (Prozac, Sarafem); fluvoxamine (Luvox); HIV protease inhibitors such as indinavir (Crixivan) and ritonavir (Norvir); ipratropium (Atrovent); isoniazid (INH, Nydrazid); medications for anxiety, blood pressure, irritable bowel disease, mental illness, motion sickness, Parkinson's disease, seizures, ulcers, or urinary problems; metoclopramide (Reglan); methadone (Dolophine); metronidazole (Flagyl); nefazodone (Serzone); oral contraceptives (birth control pills); paroxetine (Paxil); phenobarbital (Luminal, Solfoton); phenytoin (Dilantin); primidone (Mysoline); quinidine (Cardioquin, Quinaglute, Quinidex); ranitidine (Zantac); rifabutin (Mycobutin); rifampin (Rifadin, Rimactane); sedatives; sertraline (Zoloft); sleeping pills; terbinafine (Lamisil); tranquilizers; troglitazone (Rezulin); troleandomycin (TAO); verapamil (Calan, Covera, Isoptin, Verelan); and

zafirlukast (Accolate). Your doctor may need to change the doses of your medications or monitor you carefully for side effects.

- tell your doctor if you have or have ever had heart disease, heart failure, high or low blood pressure, a stroke, a mini-stroke, seizures, Alzheimer's disease, and any condition that makes it difficult for you to swallow. Also tell your doctor if you have ever had to stop taking a medication for mental illness because of severe side effects.
- tell your doctor if you are pregnant or plan to become pregnant. If you become pregnant while taking aripiprazole, call your doctor.
- you should not breastfeed while taking aripiprazole.
- if you are having surgery, including dental surgery, tell the doctor or dentist that you are taking aripiprazole.
- you should know that aripiprazole may make you drowsy. Do not drive a car or operate machinery until you know how this medication affects you.
- remember that alcohol can add to the drowsiness caused by this medication.
- you should know that aripiprazole may cause dizziness, lightheadedness, and fainting when you get up too quickly from a lying position. This is more common when you first start taking aripiprazole. To avoid this problem, get out of bed slowly, resting your feet on the floor for a few minutes before standing up.
- you should know that aripiprazole may make it harder for your body to cool down when it gets very hot. Tell your doctor if you plan to do vigorous exercise or be exposed to extreme heat. Make sure to drink plenty of fluids.

What special dietary instructions should I follow?

Talk to your doctor about drinking grapefruit juice while taking this medicine.

What should I do if I forget a dose?

Take the missed dose as soon as you remember it. However, if it is almost time for the next dose, skip the missed dose and continue your regular dosing schedule. Do not take a double dose to make up for a missed one.

What side effects can this medication cause?

Aripiprazole may cause side effects. Tell your doctor if any of these symptoms are severe or do not go away:

- headache
- nervousness
- difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep
- drowsiness
- lightheadedness
- weakness
- restlessness
- upset stomach
- vomiting
- constipation
- weight gain
- coughing
- runny nose
- shaking hands that you cannot control
- rash

- dry skin
- itchy eyes
- ear pain
- loss of appetite

Some side effects can be serious. The following symptoms are uncommon, but if you experience any of them, call your doctor immediately:

- dizziness
- fainting
- blurred vision
- slow, fast, or irregular heartbeat
- chest pain
- swelling of hands, feet, ankles, or lower legs
- depression
- seizures
- difficulty swallowing
- trouble breathing
- unusual movements of your body or face that you cannot control
- urgent need to urinate
- high fever
- muscle stiffness
- confusion
- sweating
- abnormal excitement

Aripiprazole may cause other side effects. Call your doctor if you have any unusual problems while taking this medication.

What storage conditions are needed for this medicine?

Keep this medication in the container it came in, tightly closed, and out of reach of children. Store it at room temperature and away from excess heat and moisture (not in the bathroom). Throw away any medication that is outdated or no longer needed. Talk to your pharmacist about the proper disposal of your medication.

In case of emergency/overdose

In case of overdose, call your local poison control center at 1-800-222-1222. If the victim has collapsed or is not breathing, call local emergency services at 911.

Symptoms of overdose may include:

- drowsiness
- vomiting

What other information should I know?

Keep all appointments with your doctor.

Do not let anyone else take your medication. Ask your pharmacist any questions you have about refilling your prescription.