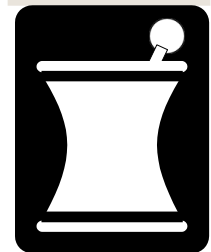


Amisulpride

Patient Information - Hillmorton Hospital Pharmacy

Why have I been prescribed Amisulpride?

Amisulpride is used to treat schizophrenia, psychosis and similar conditions. When people have schizophrenia, they may hear voices talking to them or about them. They may also become suspicious or paranoid. Some people also have problems with their thinking and feel that other people can read their thoughts. These are called “positive symptoms”. Amisulpride can help to relieve these symptoms.



Many people with schizophrenia also experience “negative symptoms”. They feel tired and lacking in energy and may become quite inactive and withdrawn. Amisulpride may help relieve these symptoms as well.

Amisulpride may also be prescribed for people who have had side effects such as strange movement and shaking, with older types of antipsychotic medicines.

What exactly is Amisulpride?

Amisulpride is one of a group of medicines used to treat schizophrenia and similar disorders. These illnesses are sometimes referred to as psychoses, hence the name given to this group of medicines, which is “antipsychotics”.

Is Amisulpride safe to take?

It is usually safe to take amisulpride regularly as prescribed by your doctor, but it doesn't suit everyone. Let your doctor know if any of the following apply to you, as extra care may be needed:

- If you have Parkinson's disease, or suffer from kidney trouble or a condition called phaeochromocytoma.
- If you are pregnant, breastfeeding or wish to become pregnant.
- If you have any heart problems e.g. an irregular heart rhythm, heart failure or a recent heart attack

How should I take Amisulpride and what should I do if I miss a dose?

Look at the label on your medicine; it should have all the necessary instructions on it. Follow this advice carefully. If you have any questions, speak to your pharmacist, doctor or nurse. Never change your dose without consulting with your doctor. If you forget a dose, take it as soon as you remember, as long as it is within a few hours of the usual time.

What will happen to me when I start taking Amisulpride?

Antipsychotics do not work straight away and it may take several days or even weeks for some of the symptoms to reduce. To begin with, most people find that this medication will help them feel more relaxed and calmer. Later, after one or two weeks, other symptoms should begin to improve.

Some people may get side effects before they start to feel any better. Most side effects should go away after a few weeks. Look at the table over the page. It tells you what to do if you get any of the usual side effects. Not everyone will get the side-effects shown. There are many other possible side-effects. Ask your pharmacist, doctor or nurse if you are worried about anything else that you think might be a side effect.

Are there any medicines I should avoid or take care with?

Always consult with your doctor or pharmacist before starting a new medicine or purchasing medicines. Amisulpride, when combined with some other medicines can cause unpleasant side effects and some medicines should not be prescribed at all for people taking amisulpride. Some heart medicines may need to be adjusted carefully when used in combination with amisulpride.

When I feel better, can I stop taking amisulpride?

No. If you stop taking amisulpride, your original symptoms may return, but this may not be for three to six months after you stop this medicine.

You and your doctor should decide together when you can come off it. Most people need to be on amisulpride for quite a long time, sometimes years. This is not thought to be harmful. Amisulpride is not addictive.

What about alcohol and marijuana?

It is recommended that people taking amisulpride do not drink alcohol, use marijuana, or other recreational drugs. These taken with amisulpride can make some people drowsy. They can also lessen the effect of amisulpride and make you clumsy which can lead to falls or accidents. As well as this, drinking alcohol or using recreational drugs often makes your psychosis worse or your mood unstable.

Once you are used to your amisulpride you can sometimes drink alcohol in small amounts without any harm. If you want a drink, try a glass of your normal drink and see how you feel. If it doesn't make you feel drowsy and clumsy, it is probably okay to drink small amounts. It pays to be cautious because alcohol affects people in different ways, especially when they are taking medication.

It is recognised that many road accidents occur because of mixing alcohol or recreational drugs with these medicines. Don't stop taking amisulpride because you plan to use marijuana or have a drink at the weekend. Discuss any concerns you may have with your doctor, pharmacist or nurse.

What is the metabolic syndrome?

Antipsychotics can occasionally cause something called the metabolic syndrome. This is a combination of weight gain, raised cholesterol and raised blood sugars. Some antipsychotics are more likely to cause the metabolic syndrome than others. When you start an antipsychotic, your weight, height and waist size will be measured. A recording of your heart called an ECG and a number of blood tests will be performed. These will be repeated several times during the first year that you are on an antipsychotic to ensure that you remain healthy. It is important when you start an antipsychotic that you eat a healthy diet and that you do some exercise. Talk to your case manager or doctor for advice about this. They may also offer to refer you to a dietitian.

Side effects	What is it?	What should I do if this happens to me?
Common		
Insomnia	Not being able to get to sleep or stay asleep at night	Discuss this with your doctor who may be able to change your dose time.
Agitation or anxiety	Being more on edge. Feeling restless.	Discuss relaxation methods with your doctor.
Raised prolactin	Prolactin is a natural hormone we all have. High levels can affect periods in women or cause impotence in men. It may also cause breast tenderness and milk secretion, in men as well as women.	Normally raised prolactin is not of concern unless its effects are troublesome. This sometimes wears off in a few weeks but discuss with you doctor anyway. It may be that a change in dose or different drug will help.
Fairly Common		
Movement disorders	Feeling shaky or having a tremor.	It is not usually dangerous. If it is bad or worries you, tell your doctor who may prescribe you something for it.
Hypotension	A low blood pressure. You may feel faint when you stand up.	Try not to stand up too quickly. If you feel dizzy, don't drive. This dizziness is not dangerous but let your doctor know.
Uncommon		
Nausea and vomiting	Feeling sick or being sick and loose bowel motions	This should wear off fairly quickly. Taking each dose with food may help. If it is bad, contact your doctor.
Movement disorders - Torticollis and oculogyric crisis	Your neck may twist back. Your eyes and tongue may move on their own.	It is not usually dangerous. If it is bad or worries you, tell your doctor who may prescribe you something for it.

Drowsiness	Feeling sleepy or sluggish	Don't drive or use machinery. As your treatment continues you should feel less drowsy. Ask your doctor if you can take your amisulpride at a different time of day.
Constipation	Feeling "bunged up" inside. You can't pass a bowel motion.	Eat more fibre, e.g. bran and vegetables. Do more walking. Make sure that you drink plenty of fluid. A mild laxative from a pharmacy might help.
Akathisia	You feel restless, unable to feel comfortable unless you are moving	Tell your doctor about this. It may be possible to change your medicine or dose or give you something to reduce these feelings.
Dry mouth	Your mouth will feel dry and you will not produce much saliva (spit). Dry mouth can cause problems with speech, taste, chewing and swallowing. It can also increase the risk of getting dental decay and infection in your mouth.	To help prevent dental problems sip water regularly to moisten your mouth. Brush your teeth twice a day with fluoride toothpaste. Avoid sugary drinks and snacks between meals. Try sugar free chewing gum to stimulate saliva or discuss using an oral lubricant with your pharmacist or dentist.
Rare		
Allergic reactions	A sudden onset of skin rash, itching, swelling of face, lips and tongue, difficulty breathing	Contact your doctor or the emergency department immediately.
NMS	Neuroleptic Malignant Syndrome includes a high body temperature, confusion, muscle stiffness and being unable to move	It usually occurs within a few weeks of starting or a dose change. Contact your doctor or the emergency department immediately. Keep cool, with fans or cool water.
Weight gain	Eating more and putting on weight, especially after you just start taking amisulpride.	Try and avoid putting on weight in the first place by eating a healthy diet full of vegetables and fibre and by doing physical activities such as walking. Avoid fatty foods like chocolate, chips and high sugar foods such as cakes, lollies and fizzy drinks. Ask to see a dietitian if you need help with food choices.

Remember, leaflets like this can only describe some effects of medication. You may also find other books or leaflets useful. If you have access to the internet, you may find a lot of information there as well. Be careful as internet-based information is not always accurate.

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