

Aripiprazole (Abilify[®], Abilify Maintena[™])

Aripiprazole is most often used to treat psychosis. It is also used to treat mania and sometimes depression.

What forms does aripiprazole come in?

- Tablets – taken daily
- Long-acting injections – given once every 4 weeks

What symptoms will aripiprazole help with?

- Aripiprazole treats different symptoms depending on why it is being used. Symptoms will be different from person to person.
- Symptoms of **psychosis** may include:
 - › Hearing or seeing things that are not real (hallucinations); a false belief, such as thinking that someone is after you or that you have special powers (delusions); finding it hard to think clearly; getting frustrated or agitated more easily than usual; loss of interest in yourself or others; or becoming withdrawn or staying away from others.
- Symptoms of **mania** may include:
 - › Feeling like you need less sleep; becoming more talkative, more active, or more irritable; being easily distracted; feeling important, powerful, or invincible.
- Symptoms of **depression** may include:
 - › Low mood; changes in your usual sleep pattern; loss of interest in things you normally enjoy; changes in your appetite; loss of energy and/or concentration, thoughts of suicide.
- There may be other reasons aripiprazole was chosen for you. Talk to your doctor or nurse to learn why it was prescribed for you.

How quickly will aripiprazole work?

- Many symptoms get better quite quickly (hours to days) and others get better over time (weeks to months).
- Frustration and agitation can improve quickly.
- Your sleep and mood should improve within the first week or so.
- Slowly over 2-8 weeks, your thoughts will become more clear and organized.
- Increased interest in yourself and things you enjoy is often slower, sometimes taking months.

How long should I take aripiprazole?

- This depends on why you are taking aripiprazole and how well it works for you. Long term use is common when aripiprazole is used to treat psychosis.
- Aripiprazole helps to treat your symptoms and to keep them from coming back.
- Stopping aripiprazole should be done with the support and advice of your doctor. You may become unwell again if you stop taking it.

What are the possible side effects of aripiprazole?

- Some side effects start early and go away. Other side effects only start after taking aripiprazole for some time.
- Some side effects are mild and others are more serious.
- **It is recommended that you talk about side effects with your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist regularly, including at the start of your treatment and throughout.**
 - › **Common:** trouble sleeping, restlessness, agitation, anxiety, headache, sleepiness, dizziness & feeling lightheaded, upset stomach, vomiting, constipation, blurry vision
 - › **Less common:** tremor, body feeling stiff and/or slow, muscle spasms, weight gain, changes in blood sugar and/or cholesterol, dizziness upon standing, fast heartbeat
 - › **RARE/SERIOUS - GET HELP RIGHT AWAY if you have any of these side effects:** rash, severe headache, fainting, breathing fast, fever, confusion, sudden weakness, sore mouth, gums or throat, going more than a couple of days without peeing or having a bowel movement; muscle pain, involuntary muscle movements (usually in your tongue and lips); sudden numbness, difficulty seeing and/or speaking.

What else do I need to know about aripiprazole?

- It may increase the effects of alcohol.
- It may affect your body's ability to control body temperature. If this happens, avoid hot and humid places and talk to your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist.
- Let your doctor know if you think you are pregnant, plan to become pregnant, or are breastfeeding.
- Check with your doctor or pharmacist before starting any new medications, including ones you buy at the drugstore and any natural health products you may be using.
- When starting the long-acting injection, you may be asked to continue to take the tablets until the injection starts to take effect.

The information in this brochure is for informational and educational purposes only. The information is not intended to be and does not constitute healthcare or medical advice. If you have any questions, please ask your healthcare provider. If you have ANY questions about your medication, please ask your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist.