

Making A Choice:

A Guide To Making A Decision About Using

Antipsychotic Medication

This is a guide developed by young people in partnership with adult providers. It is a guide to make sure you as a youth are provided with the information you need in order to have 'informed consent' when making medication decisions about antipsychotic medications.

In this guide, you will find:

- 1.) Information about antipsychotic medication.
- 2.) A list of questions to help you make a decision about these medications.
- 3.) An explanation of your rights, and what to do when you feel your rights have not been respected.
- 4.) A space to think about your goals and how using antipsychotic medications may help or challenge you as you reach for your goals.
- 5.) An exercise to help you weigh the pros and cons of taking antipsychotic medication.
- 6.) A place to list your supports and their contact information.

We hope this guide helps young people work with your supports to really understand and participate in this important decision.

This guide is made possible by a partnership of: Youth MOVE Maine, Maine's Youth Leadership Advisory Team (YLAT) and Maine's Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)

Making A Choice:

What Kinds of Things Should You Know About Antipsychotic Medication?

Decisions about your mental health treatment are very important. Antipsychotic medication is one treatment option that can be very effective in treating a variety of issues and may be recommended to help a person gain control of his or her life while the cause of the problem is being addressed.

Antipsychotic medication may be recommended when a person is struggling with hallucinations, delusions, mood disorders or aggression that gets in the way of daily life. There are also risks to taking antipsychotic medication. This guide will help you explore the risks and benefits so you can make an informed decision with your doctor and caregiver.

It's important that you know that medication is just one tool that can help you overcome mental health challenges. You have the right to know all your treatment and support options. Other treatment options may include different medications, exercise, diet, meditation and counseling. You, your doctor, and your caregiver should discuss all your treatment options and create a plan that works for you.

There are risks to taking antipsychotic medications, which may include weight gain, tiredness, changes in blood pressure, movement disorders (i.e. Tardive Dyskinesia), high cholesterol and/or diabetes. Antipsychotics are not addictive but stopping these medications without your doctor's guidance can be very dangerous, so you'll need to work closely with your doctor in all your medication decisions.

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Making A Choice:

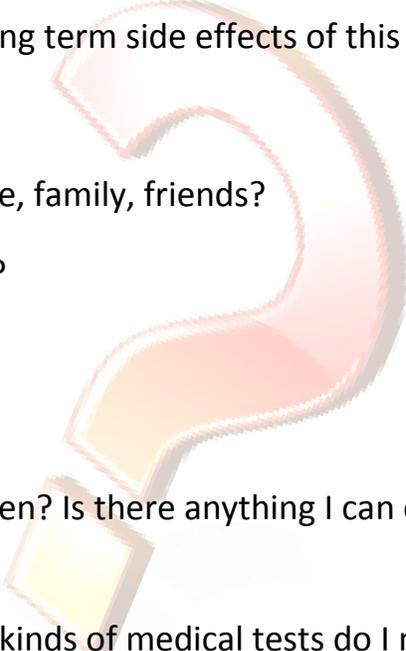
What information do YOU want to help you make your decision?

Here are some possible questions for discussion. Check each of the questions that you need answered in order to make a decision, then bring them to your doctor, psychiatrist, caregiver, caseworker, or other team members to spark conversation.

- Why do you think this is the right medication for me?
- Who needs to know I'm taking this? (teacher, friends, coach, etc)
- Will I get in trouble if I don't take this?
- What are the expected benefits of this medication in my situation?
- How will this make me feel?
- Will it make me tired?
- What are the specific side effects for the medication you are recommending?
- Will the side effects go away?
- How long should I expect to wait to see results?
- What are the names of some antipsychotic medications?
- What are the other options I have for medication?
- What are the other options besides medication that may help me?
- Why am I taking this medication?
- What will happen if I stop taking it?

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- How will I know if it's working?
- How will I know/who will decide when it's time to get off this medication?
- What happens if I'm ready to get off them?
- How long will I be on this medication? For life?
- What are the specific short term/long term side effects of this medication?
- What do I do if I have side effects?
- How might this affect my school, life, family, friends?
- Who should I tell? Why or why not?
- What are my rights?
- Do I get to help decide?
- How quickly does weight gain happen? Is there anything I can do to maintain my weight?
- Do I need blood work? What other kinds of medical tests do I need before during and after treatment?
- What is Tardive Dyskinesia? Will I get it?
- Who will find out I've taken this medication? Are there potential risks to getting a job, or joining the military if I take this medication?
- How does this help me reach my personal goals?



What other questions do you have?

- _____
- _____
- _____

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Making A Choice: *What Are Your Rights?*

Here is an excerpt from Maine's Youth Bill of Rights, specific to Mental Health:

- *You have the right to have an informed choice in the types of physical, dental and mental health care you receive.*
- *You have the right to have a choice and options when a treatment provider is being assigned to them.*
- *You have the right to see and understand your treatment plans, be informed about and have a say in treatment decisions being made.*
- *You have a right to be informed about medications, medication options and to have a voice in decisions about prescription of medication.*
- *You have a right to not be overmedicated, to not be punished for refusal to take medications, and to be made aware of the possible risks that come from refusing to take medication.*
- *You should be able to have visitation with people that are important to you while receiving treatment.*
- *You should be able to receive care and services that are fair, respectful, safe, confidential and free from discrimination.*
- *You have a right to access to your medical records.*

If you feel your rights have been violated, you should speak up to your caseworker and say that your rights have been violated, and tell them which one.

If you are still having trouble, you can speak to your caseworker's supervisor, your Guardian ad litem or a trusted adult. Be specific and provide examples.

If you don't have success there, you can contact the Ombudsman's Office. An ombudsman (pronounced om-budz-man) helps people when they have concerns about DHHS's involvement in families' lives. You have the right to call the ombudsman if you have a concern. The ombudsman will try to get more information, notify DHHS of problems and work with people to help fix the problems. Call (866)621-0758 or (207)623-1868, or visit:

<http://mainechildrensalliance.org/am/publish/ombudsman/shtml>.

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Making A Choice:

What Are Your Personal Goals?

Sometimes it is helpful to think about your life goals and determine how this decision might negatively or positively affect your ability to achieve these goals. You can use this worksheet to write your goals.

In the next three months, my goals are:

In the next one or two years, my goals are:

If I could look into a crystal ball and see myself 5 years from now, what do I hope for?



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Making A Choice:

What Are The Risks and Benefits?

You can use this worksheet to organize your thoughts around pros and cons of taking medication. Make sure you think about how they might help you or create challenges for you in reaching YOUR goals. You can share your concerns and hopes for this medication with your support people in family team meetings.

You can list the pros and cons here:

Pros/Benefits:

Cons/Risks:

If I DO
TAKE the
medication

If I DON'T
TAKE the
medication

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Making A Choice:

Who Is Your Team?

You are not alone in this decision—you have support. You can list the people you can talk to to help you make this decision here:

Role:	Name 	Phone 	Email 
Doctor:			
Psychiatrist:			
Caseworker:			
Care Provider:			
Other			
Other			

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