

Antidepressant Information Sheet

What is an antidepressant?

Antidepressants are medications that can help relieve symptoms of depression, social anxiety disorder, anxiety disorders, seasonal affective disorder, or mild chronic depression, as well as other conditions.

How do they work?

They help to restore and maintain certain chemicals in your brain to a healthy level. They can help to control symptoms of depression and help prevent these symptoms from returning.

There are 5 main groups:

1. SSRIs

(Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors)

Examples

Citalopram, escitalopram, fluoxetine, fluvoxamine, paroxetine, sertraline

Main use

Depression

Some can also be used for general anxiety disorder, social phobia, obsessive compulsive disorder, panic disorder and post traumatic stress disorder.

Common side effects

Nausea, diarrhoea, agitation, dry mouth, dizziness, insomnia, drowsiness, headache, sweating, weakness, anxiety, muscle pain, rash, rhinitis.

Significant but less common side effects include

Low sodium, palpitations, low blood pressure and increased risk of bleeding.



2. SNRIs

(Serotonin and Noradrenaline Reuptake Inhibitors)

Examples

Desvenlafaxine, duloxetine, venlafaxine

Main use

Depression

Some can be used for general anxiety disorder, social phobia and diabetic peripheral neuropathy

Common side effects

Nausea, dry mouth, constipation, yawning, dizziness, increased blood pressure, insomnia, drowsiness, headache, blurred vision, sweating, weakness, rash, tremor, decreased appetite, mydriasis (pupil dilation)

Significant but less common side effects

Low sodium, palpitations, orthostatic hypotension (drop in blood pressure when you stand up) and fainting

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3. TCAs

(Tricyclic Antidepressants)

Examples

Amitriptyline, clomipramine, dosulepsin, doxepin, imipramine, nortriptyline

Main use

Depression

Some can be used for pain management, migraine prevention, obsessive compulsive disorder, panic disorder.

Common side effects

Sedation, dry mouth, blurred vision, mydriasis (pupil dilation), decreased lacrimation (tears), constipation, weight gain, orthostatic hypotension (drop in blood pressure when you stand up), sinus tachycardia (fast heart rate), urinary hesitancy or retention, tremor, dizziness, sweating, agitation, insomnia, anxiety, confusion.

4. MAOIs

(Monoamine Oxidase Inhibitors)

Examples

Phenelzine and tranylcypromine

Main use

Depression

Can be used for some anxiety disorders.

Common side effects

Orthostatic hypotension (drop in blood pressure when you stand up), sleep disturbances (including insomnia and less commonly hypersomnia), headache, drowsiness, fatigue, weakness, agitation, tremors, twitching, myoclonus (involuntary muscle jerk), hyperreflexia (overactive reflexes), dizziness, constipation, dry mouth, weight gain.

Significant but less common side effects

Rapid increase in blood pressure usually due to consuming foods containing tyramine.

5. Others:

Examples

Agomelatine, mianserin, mirtazapine, moclobemide, reboxetine, vortioxetine.



Main use

Depression

Common side effects

Agomelatine

(private prescription only) - dizziness, abdominal pain.

Mianserin

Sedation, dry mouth, dizziness, vertigo.

Mirtazapine

Increased appetite, weight gain, sedation, weakness, peripheral oedema (swollen ankles or lower limbs).

Moclobemide

Nausea, dry mouth, constipation, diarrhoea, anxiety, restlessness, insomnia, dizziness, headache.

Reboxetine

Urinary retention, dysuria (painful urination), urinary frequency (more common in males), dry mouth, sweating, nausea, constipation, decreased appetite, orthostatic hypotension (drop in blood pressure when you stand up), increase in diastolic BP, tachycardia (fast heart rate), insomnia, headache, paraesthesia (abnormal sensation of the skin e.g. tingling or numbness), dizziness.

Vortioxetine (private prescription only)

Nausea, vomiting, constipation, dry mouth, itch

How quickly do they work and how long will I need to take them for?

The medicine will be started at a low dose and then increased depending on your response and whether you experience side effects.

These medications can take several weeks before an improvement is seen.

It is important to continue taking these medications for at least 6 months after you have started feeling better and, in some cases, you may need to take them for many years.

Is there anything I need to know whilst taking antidepressants?

Sometimes when starting to take these medications people can feel suicidal - let your GP know if you have these symptoms or if your depression gets worse.

Do not stop taking your medication abruptly - you will need to wean off them.

If one antidepressant does not work, we can try another one as not all antidepressants will suit everyone.

How do I find out more information about RMMRs?

You can download the RMMR information sheet by clicking [here](#)

How do I apply for an RMMR?

If you would like an RMMR let the staff know at your home so they can provide you with the referral form, which you can give to your GP to sign, and a consent form for you or your substitute decision maker to complete.

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