

FACTS *for* FAMILIES

No. 29

(Updated July 2004)

PSYCHIATRIC MEDICATION FOR CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS: PART II - TYPES OF MEDICATIONS

Psychiatric medications can be an effective part of the treatment for psychiatric disorders of childhood and adolescence. In recent years there have been an increasing number of new and different psychiatric medications used with children and adolescents. Research studies are underway to establish more clearly which medications are most helpful for specific disorders and presenting problems. Clinical practice and experience, as well as research studies, help physicians determine which medications are most effective for a particular child. Before recommending any medication, the psychiatrist (preferably a child and adolescent psychiatrist) should conduct a comprehensive diagnostic evaluation of the child or adolescent. Parents should be informed about known risks and/or FDA warnings before a child starts any psychiatric medication. When prescribed appropriately by an experienced psychiatrist (preferably a child and adolescent psychiatrist) and taken as directed, medication may reduce or eliminate troubling symptoms and improve daily functioning of children and adolescents with psychiatric disorders.

ADHD Medications: Stimulant and non-stimulant medications may be helpful as part of the treatment for attention deficit hyperactive disorder (ADHD). Examples of stimulants include: Dextroamphetamine (*Dexedrine, Adderal*) and Methylphenidate (*Ritalin, Metadate, Concerta*). Non-stimulant medications include Atomoxetine (*Strattera*).

Antidepressant Medications: Antidepressant medications may be helpful in the treatment of depression, school phobias, panic attacks, and other anxiety disorders, bedwetting, eating disorders, obsessive-compulsive disorder, personality disorders, posttraumatic stress disorder, and attention deficit hyperactive disorder. There are several types of antidepressant medications. Examples of **serotonin reuptake inhibitors** (SRI's) include: Fluoxetine (*Prozac*), Sertraline (*Zoloft*), Paroxetine (*Paxil*), Fluvoxamine (*Luvox*), Venlafaxine (*Effexor*), Citalopram (*Celexa*) and Escitalopram (*Lexapro*). Examples of **atypical antidepressants** include: Bupropion (*Wellbutrin*), Nefazodone (*Serzone*), Trazodone (*Desyrel*), and Mirtazapine (*Remeron*). Examples of **tricyclic antidepressants** (TCA's) include: Amitriptyline (*Elavil*), Clomipramine (*Anafranil*), Imipramine (*Tofranil*), and Nortriptyline (*Pamelor*). Examples of **monoamine oxidase inhibitors** (MAOI's) include: Phenelzine (*Nardil*), and Tranylcypromine (Parnate).

Antipsychotic Medications: These medications can be helpful in controlling psychotic symptoms (delusions, hallucinations) or disorganized thinking. These medications may also help muscle twitches ("tics") or verbal outbursts as seen in Tourette's Syndrome. They are occasionally used to treat severe anxiety and may help in reducing very aggressive behavior. Examples of **first generation antipsychotic medications** include: Chlorpromazine (*Thorazine*), Thioridazine (*Mellaril*), Fluphenazine (*Prolixin*), Trifluoperazine (*Stelazine*), Thiothixene (*Navane*), and Haloperidol (*Haldol*). **Second generation antipsychotic medications** (also known as atypical or novel) include: Clozapine (*Clozaril*), Risperidone (*Risperdal*), Quetiapine (*Seroquel*), Olanzapine (*Zyprexa*), Ziprasidone (*Geodon*) and Aripiprazole (*Abilify*).

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Mood Stabilizers and Anticonvulsant Medications: These medications may be helpful in treating bipolar disorder, severe mood symptoms and mood swings (manic and depressive), aggressive behavior and impulse control disorders. Examples include: Lithium (lithium carbonate, *Eskalith*), Valproic Acid (*Depakote*, *Depakene*), Carbamazepine (*Tegretol*), Gabapentin (*Neurontin*), Lamotrigine (*Lamictil*), Topiramate (*Topamax*), and Oxcarbazepine (*Trileptal*).

Anti-anxiety Medications: These medications may be helpful in the treatment of severe anxiety. There are several types of anti-anxiety medications: **benzodiazepines**; antihistamines; and atypicals. Examples of benzodiazepines include: Alprazolam (*Xanax*), lorazepam (*Ativan*), Diazepam (*Valium*), and Clonazepam (*Klonopin*). Examples of antihistamines include: Diphenhydramine (*Benadryl*), and Hydroxyzine (*Vistaril*). Examples of atypical anti-anxiety medications include: Buspirone (*BuSpar*), and Zolpidem (*Ambien*).

Sleep Medications: A variety of medications may be used for a short period to help with sleep problems. Examples include: Trazodone (*Desyrel*), Zolpidem (*Ambien*), Zaleplon (*Sonata*) and Diphenhydramine (*Benadryl*).

Miscellaneous Medications: Other medications are also being used to treat a variety of symptoms. For example: clonidine (*Catapres*) may be used to treat the severe impulsiveness in some children with ADHD and guanfacine (*Tenex*) for "flashbacks" in children with PTSD.

Long-Acting Medications: Many newer medications are taken once a day. These medications have the designation SR (sustained release), ER or XR (extended release), CR (controlled release) or LA (long-acting).

For additional information see *Facts for Families*:

#21 Psychiatric Medication for Children and Adolescents: Part I - How Medications Are Used,

#51 Psychiatric Medication for Children and Adolescents: Part III - Questions to Ask.

See also: *Your Child* (1998 Harper Collins)/*Your Adolescent* (1999 Harper Collins).

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The American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (AACAP) represents over 7,000 child and adolescent psychiatrists who are physicians with at least five years of additional training beyond medical school in general (adult) and child and adolescent psychiatry.

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