



# Aripiprazole

*What you should know about taking aripiprazole (Abilify)*

Aripiprazole is also known by the brand name Abilify.

Aripiprazole is an antipsychotic that acts on the serotonergic and dopaminergic systems.

Aripiprazole is used to treat psychosis, schizophrenia, and schizoaffective disorder.

## What should my health care provider know before I take this medication?

Alert your provider if you are taking any other medication or if you are pregnant, breastfeeding, or plan to become pregnant. Please tell your provider if you have low blood pressure, a seizure disorder, Parkinson's, and/or heart, kidney, or liver disease. Also alert them if you've had a stroke in the past.

## How do I take it?

Take this medication exactly as your provider prescribes. It is fine to take this medication with or without food.

## What are the possible side effects?

Feeling dizzy when you sit up or stand quickly is a possible side effect. Getting up slowly may help.

Drowsiness, blurred vision, headache, insomnia, nausea, vomiting, constipation, runny nose, loss of appetite, dry skin, weight gain, or sweating are possible side effects as well.

Avoid long exposure to the sun, heavy exercise, high temperatures and dehydration. Aripiprazole could interfere with your body's ability to cool down.

If taken for years, there is a very small risk of developing tardive dyskinesia (a permanent disorder of uncontrolled movement involving twitching of the face, body, tongue, or jaw).

Other serious yet rare side effects include seizures, tremors, muscle stiffness, feeling that you need to be moving constantly, muscle spasms and neuroleptic malignant syndrome (a temporary but serious disorder of muscle contractions linked with high fever and abnormal vital signs).

## Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or health care provider if you have questions or concerns. UWMC Clinic staff is also available to help at any time.

UW Outpatient  
Psychiatry Clinic  
206-598-7792

After hours or on the weekend call the UW Psychiatry resident on-call at 206-598-6190

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### When will it start working?

You may start to notice subtle improvement in your symptoms right away. The full effect of the medication will not be realized until you have taken a steady dose for weeks.

### What should I do if I miss a dose?

You should take it as soon as you remember unless it is within 2 hours of the next scheduled dose. In that case, skip the missed dose and take the next one as directed. Do not take double doses.

### When should I call my provider?

Call your provider, get emergency medical care, or call 911 if you:

- Feel suicidal or homicidal.
- Have an allergic reaction to your medication (hives, itching, rash, trouble breathing, tightness in chest, swelling of your lips, tongue, or throat).
- Have had a seizure.
- Have involuntary movements (facial or body twitching that you cannot control).
- Feel dizzy when you stand or sit up and getting up slowly does not relieve the feeling.
- Have high fever and muscle stiffness.

### Where can I learn more about aripiprazole?

- [www.abilify.com](http://www.abilify.com)
- Ask your pharmacist or healthcare provider.

References: Micromedex, and *Handbook of Psychiatric Drug Therapy*, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition by Arana and Rosenbaum.

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