

Antipsychotic medicines in dementia

Useful questions to ask your prescriber



Background

If you are living with dementia you might sometimes feel distressed, afraid or frustrated. This can lead to shouting, asking questions again and again, or walking around all the time. Non-medicine approaches should be tried first to help reduce distress.

If you experience psychotic symptoms, such as hallucinations (hearing voices or seeing things that are not really there) or delusions (believing something is real or true when it is not) these can cause severe agitation, or aggression. These behaviours might mean you are at risk of harming yourself or others. In these situations, you might be prescribed an antipsychotic medicine.

You, and your family and carers, should be involved in deciding if an antipsychotic medicine is going to be prescribed for you. Asking your prescriber the following questions will help you to find out more about why an antipsychotic medicine might be prescribed for you.

Questions



Why am I being prescribed an antipsychotic?
Which specific behaviours could it help?



Is there anything you need to know about me to work out what is causing my distress?



Have you ruled out any possible medical causes (such as infection, pain or constipation)?



Are there any non-medicine treatments that might help but haven't been tried yet?



What are the side effects of the medicine? If I get any side effects, what should I do?



How will I know if the antipsychotic medicine is working?



When will use of the antipsychotic medicine be reviewed? What is the plan for stopping it?



What can my carer do to support me?

