



# Antipsychotic medicines in dementia

Questions to ask about your antipsychotic medicines - advice for people living with dementia



This document was written by the **All Wales Therapeutics and Toxicology Centre** and the **All Wales Medicines Strategy Group**. It is an easy read version of 'Questions to ask your prescriber about antipsychotic medicines'.



# How to use this document



This is an easy read document. But you may still need support to read it. Ask someone you know to help you.



Medicine is often prescribed by a doctor, but other healthcare workers like some nurses and pharmacists can also do this. In this leaflet we call these people **prescribers**.



This document is about questions you can ask your **prescriber** about the medicines you might be given.



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# Dementia and antipsychotic medicines



**Dementia** is a condition that affects the brain. People with **dementia** have problems with memory and can be confused. It usually affects older people.



If you are living with **dementia** you may sometimes feel scared or annoyed.



Sometimes people shout, walk around a lot, or ask a lot of questions.



It is best to try to deal with these symptoms without using medicines, if you can.



**Psychosis** means experiencing things like:

- Hearing voices or seeing things that are not there. This is called **hallucinations**.
- Believing something is real that is not. This is called **delusions**.



These symptoms can sometimes cause people to hurt themselves, or hurt someone else.



Someone might be given a medicine called an antipsychotic to help stop these symptoms.



It is really important that you, and your family or your carers, are involved in talking about antipsychotic medicines.

# Questions you might want to ask your prescriber



- Why am I being given an antipsychotic medicine? What will it help with?



- Is there anything you need to know about me and what is making me upset?



- Could there be a medical cause? For example: pain, infection or something else?



- Are there other treatments we could try that are not medicines?

- Are there any **side effects** to the antipsychotic medicine and what should I do?

A **side effect** is when you take a medicine and it has an effect that you don't want.



- How will I know if the antipsychotic medicine is working?



- When will my **prescriber** check if the antipsychotic medicine is working for me?
- Is there a plan for stopping the antipsychotic medicine?



- Can my family or carers do anything to support me?