



Psychiatric Medications for Children & Adolescents Questions for Parents to Ask

Medication can be an important part of treatment for some psychiatric disorders in children and adolescents. Psychiatric medication should only be used as one part of a comprehensive treatment plan and ongoing evaluation and monitoring by a physician is essential.

The Children's Mental Health Waiver Program fully supports the need for parents and their child/adolescent to be fully informed about psychiatric medications before any proposed medication is prescribed and taken. Children and adolescents should be part of any discussions regarding medications, making sure that age-appropriate language is used to better their understanding.

The following is a list of questions that may be used to help children, adolescents, and their parents have a better understanding of psychiatric medications being considered:

1. What is the name of the medication? Is it known by other names?
2. What is the recommended dosage? How often will the medication be taken?
3. What are the side effects which commonly occur with this medication?
4. Are there any laboratory or medical tests that need to be done before the medication is prescribed or during the time my child is taking the medication?
5. Are there any other medications or foods which my child should avoid while taking the medication?
6. Are there interactions between this medication and other medications (prescription or over-the-counter) my child is taking?
7. Are there any activities that my child should avoid while taking this medication? Are any precautions recommended for other activities?
8. What do I do if a problem develops (if my child becomes ill, doses are missed, or side effects develop)?
9. What is known about its helpfulness with other children who have a similar condition to my child?
10. How will the medication help my child? How long before I see improvement? When will it work?
11. What are the long term effects of the medication on my child's body?
12. Is this medication addictive? Can it be abused?
13. How does my child's body process the medication and is there any damage that can occur to organs?
14. Who will be monitoring my child's response to the medication and make dosage changes as necessary? How often will progress be checked and by whom?
15. How long will my child need to take this medication? How will the decision be made to stop this medication?
16. What is the cost of the medication (generic vs. brand name)?