Aripiprazole

Brand name - Abilify *Oral dosing for adults*

Aripiprazole is a second-generation antipsychotic used for schizophrenia, bipolar 1 disorder, and as an adjunctive treatment for major depressive disorder. Its exact therapeutic mechanism is unclear but may be mediated via partial agonism at dopamine D2 and serotonin 5-HT1A receptors, and antagonism at serotonin 5-HT2A.

	Depression	Schizophrenia	Bipolar I (mania or mixed episode)
Initial Dose	2.5-5mg	10-15mg	5-10mg
Titration Timeline	Increase by 5mg every 1-2 weeks as needed and tolerated	Increase by 5-10 mg no sooner than every 2 weeks	Increase by 5mg every 1-2 weeks as needed and tolerated
Maximum Dosage	15mg	30 mg	15mg

Prescribing Pearls

- **Monitor blood pressure, weight/BMI, A1c, and lipids** before and throughout treatment.
- **Assess** extrapyramidal symptoms, tardive dyskinesia, mood changes, orthostatis, and new or worsened compulsive behaviors or urges.
- **Missed dose –** take when remembered, unless it is close to next dose, in which case skip the missed dose. Do not take two doses at once.
- **To stop or change treatment,** individualize taper and monitor for recurrence. Serious adverse reactions may require more urgent discontinuation.

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Safety

- **Pregnancy and lactation.** Use individualized risk-benefit analysis. Available human data have not established a drug-associated increase in major birth defects or miscarriage. Third-trimester antipsychotic exposure may cause neonatal extrapyramidal or withdrawal symptoms. Aripiprazole is present in human milk and may cause a reduction in milk supply. Discuss breastfeeding goals before initiation or changes. Monitor infant for dehydration and appropriate weight gain.
- **Review CYP2D6 and CYP3A4 interactions** before starting or changing dosages. Dose adjustment may be required.
- **When used adjunctively for Major Depressive Disorder –** monitor for clinical worsening, unusual behavioral changes, and suicidal thoughts, particularly in young adults and around treatment changes.
- **Urgent evaluation –** Fever with rigidity or confusion, autonomic instability, allergic reaction, syncope, or rapidly developing abnormal movements.
- **Prompt assessment –** Severe akathisia; new involuntary movements; marked hyperglycemia symptoms; or new or intense compulsive gambling, sexual, or eating behaviors; or other poorly-controlled urges.

Dementia-related psychosis. Not approved for this indication. Antipsychotic treatment is associated with increased mortality in older adults with dementia-related psychosis and carries a black box warning.

Disclaimer

Indiana CHAMP is a resource hub and consultation service to supplement clinician decision-making. The information on this sheet does not constitute medical care. The clinician is responsible for ensuring appropriate application of guidance in patient care.