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PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

# Aripiprazole

This information from Lexicomp® explains what you need to know about this medication, including what it's used for, how to take it, its side effects, and when to call your healthcare provider.

## Brand Names: US

Abilify; Abilify Discmelt [DSC]; Abilify Maintena; Abilify MyCite

## Brand Names: Canada

Abilify; Abilify Maintena

## Warning

- Drugs like this one have raised the chance of suicidal thoughts or actions in children and young adults. The risk may be greater in people who have had these thoughts or actions in the past. All people who take this drug need to be watched closely. Call the doctor right away if signs like low mood (depression), nervousness, restlessness, grouchiness, panic attacks, or changes in mood or actions are new or worse. Call the doctor right away if any thoughts or actions of suicide occur.
- There is a higher chance of death in older adults who take this drug for mental problems caused by dementia. Most of the deaths were linked to heart disease or infection. This drug is not approved to treat mental problems caused by dementia.

## What is this drug used for?

- It is used to treat schizophrenia.
- It is used to treat low mood (depression).
- It is used to treat bipolar problems.
- It is used to treat certain behavior problems in patients with autism.

- It is used to treat Tourette's syndrome.
- It may be given to your child for other reasons. Talk with the doctor.

### **Tablets with sensor (Abilify MyCite):**

- If your child has been given this form of this drug, talk with the doctor for information about the benefits and risks. Talk with the doctor if you have questions or concerns about giving this drug to your child.

## **What do I need to tell the doctor BEFORE my child takes this drug?**

- If your child has an allergy to this drug or any part of this drug.
- If your child is allergic to any drugs like this one or any other drugs, foods, or other substances. Tell the doctor about the allergy and what signs your child had, like rash; hives; itching; shortness of breath; wheezing; cough; swelling of face, lips, tongue, or throat; or any other signs.

### **If your child is breast-feeding a baby:**

- Talk with the doctor if your child is breast-feeding a baby or plans to breast-feed a baby.

This drug may interact with other drugs or health problems.

Tell the doctor and pharmacist about all of your child's drugs (prescription or OTC, natural products, vitamins) and health problems. You must check to make sure that it is safe for your child to take this drug with all of his/her drugs and health problems. Do not start, stop, or change the dose of any drug your child takes without checking with the doctor.

## **What are some things I need to know or do while my child takes this drug?**

### **All products:**

- Tell all of your child's health care providers that your child is taking this drug. This includes your child's doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and dentists.
- To lower the chance of feeling dizzy or passing out, have your child rise

slowly if your child has been sitting or lying down. Have your child be careful going up and down stairs.

- Have your child's blood work checked often. Talk with your child's doctor.
- If your child drinks grapefruit juice or eats grapefruit often, talk with your child's doctor.
- Have your child avoid tasks or actions that call for alertness or clear eyesight until you see how this drug affects your child. These are things like riding a bike, playing sports, or using items such as scissors, lawnmowers, electric scooters, toy cars, or motorized vehicles.
- Alcohol may interact with this drug. Be sure your child does not drink alcohol.
- Talk with your doctor before you use other drugs and natural products that slow your actions.
- Have your child be careful in hot weather or while your child is being active. Have your child drink lots of fluids to stop fluid loss.
- Chance of seizures may be higher. Talk with the doctor.
- Low white blood cell counts have happened with drugs like this one. This may lead to a higher chance of getting an infection. Deadly infections have rarely happened. Tell your doctor if you have ever had a low white blood cell count. Call your doctor right away if you have signs of infection like fever, chills, or sore throat. Talk with your doctor.
- High blood sugar or diabetes, high cholesterol, and weight gain have happened with drugs like this one. These changes may raise the chance of heart and brain blood vessel disease. Talk with the doctor.
- Have your child's blood sugar checked as you have been told by your child's doctor.
- Dizziness, sleepiness, and feeling less stable may happen with this drug. These may lead to falling. Broken bones or other health problems can happen from falling. Talk with the doctor.

**If your child is pregnant:**

- Tell the doctor if your child is pregnant or becomes pregnant. You will need

to talk about the benefits and risks of your child using this drug while pregnant.

- Taking this drug in the third trimester of pregnancy may lead to muscle movements that cannot be controlled and withdrawal in the newborn. Talk with the doctor.

### **Oral-disintegrating tablet:**

- If your child has phenylketonuria (PKU), talk with your child's doctor. Some products have phenylalanine.

### **Liquid:**

- If your child is not able to break down sucrose or fructose, talk with your child's doctor. Some products have sucrose or fructose.

## **What are some side effects that I need to call my child's doctor about right away?**

**WARNING/CAUTION:** Even though it may be rare, some people may have very bad and sometimes deadly side effects when taking a drug. Tell your child's doctor or get medical help right away if your child has any of the following signs or symptoms that may be related to a very bad side effect:

- Signs of an allergic reaction, like rash; hives; itching; red, swollen, blistered, or peeling skin with or without fever; wheezing; tightness in the chest or throat; trouble breathing, swallowing, or talking; unusual hoarseness; or swelling of the mouth, face, lips, tongue, or throat.
- Signs of high blood sugar like confusion, feeling sleepy, more thirst, more hungry, passing urine more often, flushing, fast breathing, or breath that smells like fruit.
- Trouble controlling body movements, twitching, change in balance, trouble swallowing or speaking.
- Strong urges that are hard to control (such as eating, gambling, sex, or spending money).
- Very bad dizziness or passing out.
- Change in balance.

- Feeling very tired or weak.
- Seizures.
- Blurred eyesight.
- A very bad and sometimes deadly health problem called neuroleptic malignant syndrome (NMS) may happen. Call your child's doctor right away if your child has any fever, muscle cramps or stiffness, dizziness, very bad headache, confusion, change in thinking, fast heartbeat, heartbeat that does not feel normal, or is sweating a lot.
- Some people who take this drug may get a very bad muscle problem called tardive dyskinesia. This muscle problem may not go away even if this drug is stopped. Sometimes, signs may lessen or go away over time after this drug is stopped. The risk of tardive dyskinesia may be greater in people with diabetes and in older adults, especially older women. The risk is also greater the longer your child takes this drug or with higher doses. Muscle problems may also occur after short-term use with low doses. Call your child's doctor right away if your child has trouble controlling body movements or if your child has muscle problems with his/her tongue, face, mouth, or jaw like tongue sticking out, puffing cheeks, mouth puckering, or chewing.

## **What are some other side effects of this drug?**

All drugs may cause side effects. However, many people have no side effects or only have minor side effects. Call your child's doctor or get medical help if any of these side effects or any other side effects bother your child or do not go away:

### **All products:**

- Dizziness.
- Feeling sleepy.
- Feeling tired or weak.
- Anxiety.
- Headache.
- Upset stomach or throwing up.
- Weight gain.

- Restlessness.
- Constipation.
- Trouble sleeping.
- Feeling more or less hungry.
- Nose and throat irritation.
- Dry mouth.
- Shakiness.
- Drooling.
- Stuffy nose.

**Injection:**

- Pain where the shot was given.

These are not all of the side effects that may occur. If you have questions about side effects, call your child's doctor. Call your child's doctor for medical advice about side effects.

You may report side effects to your national health agency.

**How is this drug best given?**

Give this drug as ordered by your child's doctor. Read all information given to you. Follow all instructions closely.

**All oral products:**

- Give this drug with or without food.
- To gain the most benefit, do not miss giving your child doses.
- Keep giving this drug to your child as you have been told by your child's doctor or other health care provider, even if your child feels well.

**Tablets:**

- Have your child swallow whole. Do not let your child chew, break, or crush.

**Liquid:**

- Measure liquid doses carefully. Use the measuring device that comes with this drug. If there is none, ask the pharmacist for a device to measure this drug.

**Oral-disintegrating tablet:**

- Do not push the tablet out of the foil when opening. Use dry hands to take it from the foil. Place on your child's tongue and let it dissolve. Water is not needed. Do not let your child swallow it whole. Do not let your child chew, break, or crush it.

**Injection:**

- It is given as a shot into a muscle.

**All products:**

- Have your child drink lots of noncaffeine liquids every day unless told to drink less liquid by your child's doctor.

**What do I do if my child misses a dose?****All oral products:**

- Give a missed dose as soon as you think about it.
- If it is close to the time for your child's next dose, skip the missed dose and go back to your child's normal time.
- Do not take 2 doses at the same time or extra doses.

**Injection:**

- Call your child's doctor to find out what to do.

**How do I store and/or throw out this drug?****All oral products:**

- Store at room temperature.
- Store in a dry place. Do not store in a bathroom.

## **Liquid:**

- After opening, throw away any part not used after 6 months.

## **Oral-disintegrating tablet:**

- Give oral-disintegrating tablet right after opening. Throw away any part of opened pouch that is not used.

## **Injection:**

- If you need to store this drug at home, talk with your child's doctor, nurse, or pharmacist about how to store it.

## **All products:**

- Keep all drugs in a safe place. Keep all drugs out of the reach of children and pets.
- Throw away unused or expired drugs. Do not flush down a toilet or pour down a drain unless you are told to do so. Check with your pharmacist if you have questions about the best way to throw out drugs. There may be drug take-back programs in your area.

## **General drug facts**

- If your child's symptoms or health problems do not get better or if they become worse, call your child's doctor.
- Do not share your child's drug with others and do not give anyone else's drug to your child.
- Keep a list of all your child's drugs (prescription, natural products, vitamins, OTC) with you. Give this list to your child's doctor.
- Talk with your child's doctor before giving your child any new drug, including prescription or OTC, natural products, or vitamins.
- Some drugs may have another patient information leaflet. If you have any questions about this drug, please talk with your child's doctor, nurse, pharmacist, or other health care provider.



- If you think there has been an overdose, call your poison control center or get medical care right away. Be ready to tell or show what was taken, how much, and when it happened.

## Consumer Information Use and Disclaimer

This information should not be used to decide whether or not to take this medicine or any other medicine. Only the healthcare provider has the knowledge and training to decide which medicines are right for a specific patient. This information does not endorse any medicine as safe, effective, or approved for treating any patient or health condition. This is only a brief summary of general information about this medicine. It does NOT include all information about the possible uses, directions, warnings, precautions, interactions, adverse effects, or risks that may apply to this medicine. This information is not specific medical advice and does not replace information you receive from the healthcare provider. You must talk with the healthcare provider for complete information about the risks and benefits of using this medicine.

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If you have any questions, contact a member of your healthcare team directly. If you're a patient at MSK and you need to reach a provider after 5:00 PM, during the weekend, or on a holiday, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit [www.mskcc.org/pe](http://www.mskcc.org/pe) to search our virtual library.

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