



## 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 Maintena; Abilify MyCite

### **Brand Names: Canada**

Abilify; Abilify Maintena

### **Warning**

- 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.
- 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.

## **What is this drug used for?**

- It is used to treat schizophrenia.
- It is used to treat bipolar problems.
- It is used to treat low mood (depression).
- 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 you for other reasons. Talk with the doctor.

## **What do I need to tell my doctor BEFORE I take this drug?**

- If you have an allergy to aripiprazole or any other part of this drug.
- If you are allergic to any drugs like this one, any other drugs, foods, or other substances. Tell your doctor about the allergy and what signs you had, like rash; hives; itching; shortness of breath; wheezing; cough; swelling of face, lips, tongue, or throat; or any other signs.
- If you are breast-feeding or plan to breast-feed.

This drug may interact with other drugs or health problems.

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

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

### **All products:**

- Tell all of your health care providers that you take this drug. This includes your doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and dentists.
- Avoid driving and doing other tasks or actions that call for you to be alert or have clear eyesight until you see how this drug affects you.
- To lower the chance of feeling dizzy or passing out, rise slowly if you have been sitting or lying down. Be careful going up and down stairs.
- Have blood work checked as you have been told by the doctor. Talk with the doctor.
- Avoid drinking alcohol while taking this drug.
- Talk with your doctor before you use other drugs and natural products that slow your actions.
- If you drink grapefruit juice or eat grapefruit often, talk with your doctor.

- Be careful in hot weather or while being active. 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.
- Check your blood sugar as you have been told by your 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.
- Older adults with dementia taking drugs like this one have had a higher number of strokes. Sometimes these strokes have been deadly. This drug is not approved to treat mental problems caused by dementia. Talk with your doctor.
- If you are 65 or older, use this drug with care. You could have more side effects.

- Tell your doctor if you are pregnant or plan on getting pregnant. You will need to talk about the benefits and risks of using this drug while you are 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 you have phenylketonuria (PKU), talk with your doctor. Some products have phenylalanine.

### **Liquid:**

- If you are not able to break down sucrose or fructose, talk with your doctor. Some products have sucrose or fructose.

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

- The patch may have metal. Take off the patch before an MRI.

### **What are some side effects that I need to call my 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 doctor or get medical help right away if you have any of the following signs or symptoms that may be related to a very bad side effect:

### **All products:**

- 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 doctor right away if you have any fever, muscle cramps or stiffness, dizziness, very bad headache, confusion, change in thinking, fast heartbeat, heartbeat that does not feel normal, or are 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 you take this drug or with higher doses. Muscle problems may also occur after short-term use with low doses. Call your doctor right away if you have trouble controlling body movements or if you have muscle problems with your tongue, face, mouth, or jaw like tongue sticking out, puffing cheeks, mouth puckering, or chewing.

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

- Skin irritation where the patch was placed.

### **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 doctor or get medical help if any of these side effects or any other side effects bother you or do not go away:

### **All products:**

- Dizziness.
- Feeling sleepy.
- Feeling tired or weak.
- Restlessness.
- Anxiety.

- Headache.
- Upset stomach or throwing up.
- Weight gain.
- 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 doctor. Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects.

You may report side effects to your national health agency.

### **How is this drug best taken?**

Use this drug as ordered by your doctor. Read all information given to you. Follow all instructions closely.

### **All oral products other than Abilify MyCite:**



- Take with or without food.
- To gain the most benefit, do not miss doses.
- Keep taking this drug as you have been told by your doctor or other health care provider, even if you feel well.

### **Tablets:**

- Swallow whole. Do not 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 tongue and let it dissolve. Water is not needed. Do not swallow it whole. Do not chew, break, or crush it.

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

- While you are taking this drug, you will also wear a patch with a sensor that tracks when you take one of the tablets. You will also need to use a smartphone app. Be sure you know how to take the tablets, where to put the patch, other details about the patch, and how to use the smartphone app. Follow what your doctor has told you to do. Read the

package insert for details. If you have questions, talk with your doctor.

- Take tablets with or without food. Take with food if it causes an upset stomach.
- Swallow tablet whole. Do not chew, break, or crush.
- To gain the most benefit, do not miss doses.
- Keep taking this drug as you have been told by your doctor or other health care provider, even if you feel well.

### **Injection:**

- It is given as a shot into a muscle.

### **All products:**

- Drink lots of noncaffeine liquids every day unless told to drink less liquid by your doctor.

### **What do I do if I miss a dose?**

#### **Injection:**

- Call your doctor to find out what to do.

### **All other products:**

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

## How do I store and/or throw out this drug?

### **Injection:**

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

### **All other 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:**

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

### **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 symptoms or health problems do not get better or if they become worse, call your doctor.
- Do not share your drugs with others and do not take anyone else's drugs.
- Keep a list of all your drugs (prescription, natural products, vitamins, OTC) with you. Give this list to your doctor.
- Talk with the doctor before starting 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 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.

## **Last Reviewed Date**

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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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