PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Asenapine

This information from UpToDate® Lexidrug™ 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

Saphris; Secuado

Brand Names: Canada

Saphris

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.

What is this drug used for?

- It is used to treat schizophrenia.
- It is used to treat bipolar disorder.
- 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 are allergic to this drug; any part of this drug; or any other drugs, foods, or substances. Tell your doctor about the allergy and what signs you had.
- If you have any of these health problems: Liver problems, low magnesium levels, low potassium levels, or slow heartbeat.
- If you have ever had a long QT on ECG or other heartbeat that is not normal.
- If you are taking any drugs that can cause a certain type of heartbeat that is not normal (prolonged QT interval). There are many drugs that can do this. Ask your doctor or pharmacist if you are not sure.

This is not a list of all drugs or health problems that interact with this drug.

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 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.
- Dizziness, sleepiness, and feeling less stable may happen with this drug. These may lead to falling, which can cause broken bones or other health problems.

- Have blood work checked as you have been told by the doctor. Talk with the doctor.
- High blood sugar or diabetes, high cholesterol, and weight gain have happened with drugs like this one. These may raise the chance of heart and brain blood vessel disease.
- Check your blood sugar as you have been told by your doctor.
- Talk with your doctor before you use alcohol, marijuana or other forms of cannabis, or prescription or OTC drugs that may slow your actions.
- Be careful in hot weather or while being active. Drink lots of fluids to stop fluid loss.
- Older adults with dementia taking drugs like this one have had a higher number of strokes. Sometimes these have been deadly. This drug is not approved to treat mental problems caused by dementia.
- If you are 65 or older, use this drug with care. You could have more side effects.
- Tell your doctor if you are pregnant, plan on getting pregnant, or are breast-feeding. You will need to talk about the benefits and risks to you and the baby.
- Taking this drug in the third trimester of pregnancy may lead to side effects or withdrawal in the newborn.

Skin patch:

- Avoid using a heating pad or other heating devices on the treated area.
- Skin reactions have happened where the patch is put on. This includes redness, itching, pain, swelling, burning, and other skin irritation. This may be more likely if the patch is left on for too long or if the same patch site is used a lot. Skin reactions have happened more often in Black patients. Watch for skin irritation. If you have irritation where the patch is placed, take it off and put on a new one in a different place.

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, unusual thirst or hunger, passing urine more often, flushing, fast breathing, or breath that smells like fruit.
- Fast, slow, or abnormal heartbeat.
- Shortness of breath.
- Severe dizziness or passing out.
- Trouble controlling body movements, twitching, change in balance, trouble swallowing or speaking.
- Seizures.
- Enlarged breasts, nipple discharge, not able to get or keep an erection, or menstrual changes.
- Low white blood cell counts have happened with drugs like this one. This may lead to a higher chance of infection. Rarely, infections have been deadly. 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.
- 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 may get a severe muscle problem called tardive dyskinesia. This problem may lessen or go away after stopping this drug, but it may not go away. The risk is greater with diabetes and in older adults, especially older females. The risk is greater with longer use or higher doses, but it may also occur after short-term use with low doses. Call your doctor right away if you have trouble controlling body movements or problems with your tongue, face, mouth, or jaw like tongue sticking out, puffing cheeks, mouth puckering, or chewing.

Under the tongue (sublingual) tablet:

- Mouth irritation or mouth sores.

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:

- Feeling dizzy, sleepy, tired, or weak.
- Headache.
- Restlessness.
- Upset stomach or throwing up.
- Stomach pain.
- Increased appetite.
- Weight gain.
- Trouble sleeping.
- Constipation.

Under the tongue (sublingual) tablet:

- Numbness or tingling in the mouth.
- Change in taste.

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.

You may report side effects to the FDA at 1-800-332-1088. You may also report side effects at https://www.fda.gov/medwatch.

How is this drug best taken?

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

Under the tongue (sublingual) tablet:

- Wash and dry your hands before you take this drug. Do not touch the tablet with wet or damp hands.
- Do not take this drug out of the blister pack until you are ready to take it. Take this drug right away after opening the blister pack. Do not store the removed drug for future use.
- Place tablet under the tongue and let dissolve.
- Do not swallow whole. Do not chew, break, or crush.
- Do not eat or drink for at least 10 minutes after taking this drug.
- Keep taking this drug as you have been told by your doctor or other health care provider, even if you feel well.

Skin patch:

- Wash your hands before and after use.
- Put patch on clean, dry, healthy skin on the upper arm, upper back, stomach, or hip.
- If there is hair where you are putting the patch, clip the hair as close to the skin as you can. Do not shave the hair.
- Do not put on skin where you have just used creams, oils, lotions, or other skin products.
- Do not put on skin that is irritated or damaged. Do not put on an area with skin folds or skin that will be rubbed by tight clothes.
- Wear only one patch at a time.
- Move the site where you put this drug on with each dose.
- After you take off a skin patch, be sure to fold the sticky sides of the patch to each other. Throw away used patches where children and pets cannot get to them.
- Keep using this drug as you have been told by your doctor or other health care provider, even if you feel well.
- Do not cut or divide patches. Do not use patches that are damaged.
- If the patch loosens at the edges, press the edges firmly.
- If the patch falls off, put a new one on.
- You may shower while wearing the patch. Do not swim or bathe while wearing the patch.

What do I do if I miss a dose?

Under the tongue (sublingual) tablet:

- 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.

Skin patch:

- Put on a missed patch as soon as you think about it after taking off the old one.
- If it is close to the time for your next dose, skip the missed dose and go back to your normal time.
- Do not put on more than 1 patch at a time.

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

All products:

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

Skin patch:

- Store in pouch until ready for use.

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.
- 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.
- Some drugs may have another patient information leaflet. Check with your pharmacist. 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 generalized information is a limited summary of diagnosis, treatment, and/or medication information. It is not meant to be comprehensive and should be used as a tool to help the user understand and/or assess potential diagnostic and treatment options. It does NOT include all information about conditions, treatments, medications, side effects, or risks that may apply to a specific patient. It is not intended to be medical advice or a substitute for the medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment of a health care provider based on the health care provider's examination and assessment of a patient's specific and unique circumstances. Patients must speak with a health care provider for complete information about their health, medical questions, and treatment options, including any risks or benefits regarding use of medications. This information does not endorse any treatments or medications as safe, effective, or approved for treating a specific patient. UpToDate, Inc. and its affiliates disclaim any warranty or liability relating to this information or the use thereof. The use of this information is governed by the Terms of Use, available at https://www.wolterskluwer.com/en/know/clinical-effectiveness-terms.

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If you have questions or concerns, contact your healthcare provider. A member of your care team will answer Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Outside those hours, you can leave a message or talk with another MSK provider. There is always a doctor or nurse on call. If you're not sure how to reach your healthcare provider, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit www.mskcc.org/pe to search our virtual library.

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