ABILIFY (Aripiprazole)

What is it for?
Abilify is an atypical antipsychotic drug used in the treatment of schizophrenia in adults and adolescents over the age of 12. It has also been approved for treatment of manic and mixed episodes of bipolar I disorder in adults and children as young as 10, as an added treatment for major depression in adults, and as a treatment for irritability associated with autistic disorder.

What does it do?
Abilify has the effect of diminishing the symptoms of schizophrenia by reducing psychotic symptoms (delusions and hallucinations), in addition to improving cognitive functioning and mood. Pharmacologically, Abilify appears to block the central nervous system neurotransmitters dopamine and serotonin.

NOTE
Pregnancy Risk Category C (risk cannot be ruled out; see Appendix B).

What are the side effects?
Individuals taking Abilify may experience a wide range of side effects, including these:
1. Dizziness when standing up
2. Headache
3. Nausea/vomiting
4. Anxiety
5. Insomnia
6. Tardive dyskinesia/NMS

NOTES
- Tardive dyskinesia is a condition that may develop in individuals of any age group treated with antipsychotic medications for an extended period of time. Symptoms include involuntary movements of the face, tongue, mouth, or jaw and, to a lesser degree, involuntary rhythmic movements of the extremities. There is no known treatment for this condition.
- The medical literature has also reported the occurrence of neuroleptic malignant syndrome (NMS) in individuals taking antipsychotic medication.

NMS is a rare but potentially fatal medication reaction involving a range of symptoms, including muscle rigidity, disorientation, irregular pulse and blood pressure, and tachycardia.

- Elderly individuals with dementia-related psychosis are at increased risk of death if treated with antipsychotic drugs and should not take Abilify.
- Antidepressants may increase the risk of suicidal thinking and behavior in children, adolescents, and young adults with a major depressive disorder.
- There is a risk of developing hyperglycemia and diabetes mellitus in individuals treated with atypical antipsychotic medications, including Abilify.

What are the dosages and forms?
The typical adult dosage range of Abilify for treatment of schizophrenia and bipolar I mania is 10–30 mg/day administered in a single dose. As a supportive treatment for depression in adults, the dosage range is 2–15 mg/day. In adolescents with schizophrenia, the typical daily dosage range is 2–30 mg/day, and as a treatment for bipolar I mania in children and adolescents, the dosage range is 2–30 mg/day. As a treatment for irritability associated with autistic disorder the dosage range is 2–15 mg/day. Abilify is well-absorbed and reaches peak plasma levels within 3–5 hours after administration. It may take up to 14 days for the full therapeutic effects of Abilify to become apparent.

- Tablet form (Otsuka): 2 mg (rectangular, green); 5 mg (rectangular, blue); 10 mg (rectangular, pink); 15 mg (round, yellow with specks); 20 mg (round, white); 30 mg (round, pink). Tablets are imprinted with the dosage strength. Abilify is also available as an orally disintegrating tablet (Abilify Discmelt): 10 mg (round, pink); 15 mg (round, yellow).
- Liquid form (Otsuka): Abilify is available in liquid form (1 mg/ml).
- Injection form (Bristol-Myers Squibb): Abilify is available as an intramuscular injection (9.75 mg/1.3 ml).

This fact sheet is not intended to cover all possible medication uses, directions, precautions, drug interactions, or adverse effects and is not a substitute for specific medical advice or to be used as a guide for prescribing.
LAMICTAL (Lamotrigine)

Lamictal is available in generic form.

What is it for?
Lamictal is an anticonvulsant usually used in combination with other anticonvulsant medications to control partial seizures, generalized tonic-clonic seizures, and generalized seizures of Lennox-Gastaut syndrome. It has also been used as maintenance treatment for bipolar disorder to delay the time between mood episodes.

What does it do?
The exact mechanism of Lamictal’s action is not known. It is presumed that Lamictal reduces the spread of seizure activity and stabilizes brain activity associated with seizures.

NOTE
Pregnancy Risk Category C (risk cannot be ruled out; see Appendix B). Physicians are advised to recommend pregnant patients taking Lamictal register with the Antiepileptic Drug Pregnancy Registry at http://aedpregnancyregistry.org.

What are the side effects?
Individuals taking Lamictal may experience a wide range of side effects, including the following:

1. Headache
2. Dizziness
3. Blurred vision
4. Nausea/vomiting
5. Drowsiness
6. Skin rash

NOTES
- Lamictal is associated with a rare but potentially life-threatening skin rash. Approximately 1 in 1,000 adults develop this rash. In children, the risk is much greater. The use of Lamictal in children under the age of 16 is not approved, unless they have seizures associated with Lennox-Gastaut syndrome.
- Antiseizure drugs should not be discontinued abruptly due to a risk of increased seizure activity.
- Individuals taking antiepileptic drugs, including Lamictal, should be monitored closely for the emergence or worsening of suicidal thoughts or behavior.

What are the dosages and forms?
The use of Lamictal for mood disorders in children under the age of 18 has not been approved. It has been approved in children as young as 2 years of age as an adjunctive treatment for the forms of epilepsy described above. Lamictal enters the bloodstream fairly quickly, with peak blood levels observed within 1–4 hours after ingestion. Since Lamictal is generally prescribed in combination with other drugs, the maximum recommended dosage may vary depending on which other medications are used in conjunction.

- Tablet form (GlaxoSmithKline): 25 mg (shield-shaped, white); 100 mg (shield-shaped, peach); 150 mg (shield-shaped, cream); 200 mg (shield-shaped, blue). Tablets are imprinted with the word LAMICTAL and the dosage.
- Lamictal is also available in chewable tablet form (GlaxoSmithKline): 2 mg (round, white); 5 mg (capsule-shaped, white); 25 mg (square, white) and as an orally disintegrating tablet (GlaxoSmithKline): 25 mg (round, white); 50 mg (round, white); 100 mg (round, white); 200 mg (round, white).
ZOLOFT (Sertraline hydrochloride)

Zoloft is available in generic form.

What is it for?
Zoloft is an antidepressant and is used in the treatment of major depressive disorder (MDD). It has also been used to treat obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), panic disorder, social anxiety disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and premenstrual dysphoric disorder (PMDD).

What does it do?
Zoloft belongs to a group of antidepressants known as selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs). As such, it acts to block or inhibit the reabsorption of serotonin, a central nervous system neurotransmitter. The intended effect is an elevation of mood, improved cognitive and psychomotor functioning, and improved concentration.

NOTE
Pregnancy Risk Category C (risk cannot be ruled out; see Appendix B).

What are the side effects?
Individuals taking Zoloft may experience a wide range of side effects, including the following:
1. Nausea/diarrhea
2. Tremors/shakiness
3. Increased sweating
4. Decreased libido
5. Drowsiness/fatigue
6. Dry mouth

NOTES
- It is recommended that Zoloft not be taken in combination with monoamine oxidase inhibitors (MAOIs) or within 14 days of discontinuing treatment with an MAOI. At least 14 days should be allowed after stopping Zoloft before starting an MAOI.
- A serious, potentially life-threatening condition known as serotonin syndrome can occur when SSRIs and certain medications, such as those used to treat migraine headaches (e.g., triptans), are taken together.
- Zoloft should not be taken in combination with the antipsychotic drug Orap (pimozide).
- Individuals taking Zoloft should be monitored closely for the potential of worsening depression or the emergence of suicidal thoughts or behavior, particularly in the early stages of medication treatment or when dosages change.

What are the dosages and forms?
Zoloft has been clinically evaluated and shown to be effective in treating OCD in children ages 6–17. The typical dose for children with OCD is 25–50 mg/day. Depending upon the condition being treated, the typical adult dosage range for Zoloft is 25–200 mg/day, usually given in a single dose, either in the morning or evening. Peak blood levels of Zoloft usually occur within 4–8 hours. It may take a week or more for a stable plasma level to be reached.

- Tablet form (Pfizer): 25 mg (elongated, green); 50 mg (elongated, light blue); 100 mg (elongated, light yellow). Tablets are imprinted with the word ZOLOFT along with the dosage strength.
- Liquid form (Pfizer): Zoloft is available as a liquid concentrate (20 mg/ml).