

## **Understanding NICE guidance**

---

Information for people who use NHS services

# **Aripiprazole for schizophrenia in people aged 15 to 17 years**

*NICE 'technology appraisal guidance' advises on when and how drugs and other treatments should be used in the NHS.*

This leaflet is about when **aripiprazole** should be used to treat people aged 15 to 17 years with schizophrenia in the NHS in England and Wales. It explains guidance (advice) from NICE (the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence). It is written for people aged 15 to 17 years with schizophrenia but it may also be useful for their families or carers or for anyone with an interest in the condition.

It does not describe schizophrenia or the treatments in detail – a member of your healthcare team should discuss these with you. You can get more information from the organisations listed on the back page.



*This may not be the only possible treatment for schizophrenia in people aged 15 to 17 years. Your healthcare team should talk to you, and if appropriate your family or carers, about whether it is suitable for you and about other treatment options available.*

### **What has NICE said?**

NICE recommends aripiprazole as a possible treatment for some people aged 15 to 17 years with schizophrenia (see below).

### **Who can have aripiprazole?**

You should be able to have aripiprazole if:

- you cannot take risperidone for medical reasons **or**
- you have taken risperidone but it has not worked.

### **Why has NICE said this?**

NICE looks at how well treatments work, and also at how well they work in relation to how much they cost the NHS. NICE recommended aripiprazole in these circumstances because it works as well and costs about the same as other alternatives to risperidone available on the NHS, but is less likely to produce the types of side effects that are especially troublesome for people aged 15 to 17 years.

## **Schizophrenia**

Schizophrenia is a condition that affects a person's mental state, including their thoughts, mood and behaviour. The condition varies from person to person but the main symptoms are:

- hearing voices and sometimes seeing things that are not there
- having fixed beliefs that are false but that the person believes in completely.

## Aripiprazole

Aripiprazole (also known as Abilify) controls some of the effects of certain chemicals in the brain that are thought to affect thinking, feelings and behaviour.

### What does this mean for me?

When NICE recommends a treatment, the NHS must make sure it is available to those people it could help, normally within 3 months of the guidance being issued.

So, if you have schizophrenia, and you and your doctor think that aripiprazole is the right treatment for you (see 'What has NICE said?' across the page), you should be able to have the treatment on the NHS. Please see [www.nice.org.uk/aboutguidance](http://www.nice.org.uk/aboutguidance) if you think you are eligible for the treatment but it is not available.

If you are already taking aripiprazole for schizophrenia but you do not meet the criteria listed in 'What has NICE said?' across the page, you should be able to continue taking it until you, your parents or carers if appropriate, and your doctor decide it is the right time to stop.

## More information

The organisations below can provide more information and support for people aged 15 to 17 years with schizophrenia. NICE is not responsible for the quality or accuracy of any information or advice provided by these organisations.

- Hafal, 01792 816 600  
[www.hafal.org](http://www.hafal.org)
- Mind, 0845 766 0163  
[www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)
- Rethink, 0845 456 0455  
[www.rethink.org](http://www.rethink.org)
- SANE, 0845 767 8000  
[www.sane.org.uk](http://www.sane.org.uk)
- YoungMinds, Parents Helpline: 0808 802 5544  
[www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk)

NHS Choices ([www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)) may be a good place to find out more. Your local patient advice and liaison service (usually known as 'PALS') may be able to give you more information and support. If you live in Wales you should speak to NHS Direct Wales for information on who to contact.

## About NICE

NICE produces guidance (advice) for the NHS about preventing, diagnosing and treating medical conditions. The guidance is written by independent experts, including healthcare professionals and people representing patients and carers. They consider the evidence on the disease and treatments, the views of patients and carers and the experiences of doctors, nurses and other healthcare professionals, and consider the costs involved. Staff working in the NHS are expected to follow this guidance.

*To find out more about NICE, its work and how it reaches decisions, see [www.nice.org.uk/aboutguidance](http://www.nice.org.uk/aboutguidance)*

*This leaflet and other versions of the guidance aimed at healthcare professionals are available at [www.nice.org.uk/guidance/TA213](http://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/TA213)*

*You can order printed copies of this leaflet from NICE publications (phone 0845 003 7783 or email [publications@nice.org.uk](mailto:publications@nice.org.uk) and quote reference N2422). The NICE website has a screen reader service called Browsealoud, which allows you to listen to our guidance. Click on the Browsealoud logo on the NICE website to use this service.*

*We encourage NHS and voluntary organisations to use text from this leaflet in their own information about schizophrenia.*