

Amisulpride and Sulpiride

(pronounced ami-sul-pride and sul-pi-ride)

Why has amisulpride or sulpiride been prescribed?

Amisulpride and sulpiride are antipsychotics used to treat schizophrenia and other similar conditions.

What are the benefits of taking amisulpride or sulpiride?

Antipsychotics are effective in reducing the symptoms of psychosis. They also shorten the time to recovery and help prevent relapses.

Are there any precautions with amisulpride or sulpiride?

Amisulpride and sulpiride are suitable for most people. As with all medicines, however, there are precautions. Your prescriber will usually check that it is safe to prescribe either of these medicines, but let your prescriber know if any of the following apply to you, as extra care may be needed:

- a) if you suffer from heart or kidney trouble or acute porphyria if you have been prescribed sulpiride
- b) if you are taking any other medication, especially for Parkinson's Disease, antidepressants, mood stabilisers, medicines for high blood pressure and medicines to treat an irregular heart beat. Also, tell your prescriber if you buy any medicine 'over the counter' from a pharmacy or supermarket. Please also tell your prescriber if you take any alternative or complementary medicine such as Chinese herbal medicines.
- c) if you are pregnant, breast feeding, or wish to become pregnant.
- d) if you are lactose intolerant as the tablets of both amisulpride and sulpiride contain lactose. However the liquid preparation of both products do not contain lactose.

What is the usual dose of amisulpride or sulpiride?

For amisulpride, the usual dose is 400mg to 800mg a day. Some people may be prescribed a lower dose. The maximum dose of amisulpride is 1200mg. For sulpiride, the usual dose is to 1200mg a day but, as with amisulpride, lower doses may be used. The maximum daily dose of sulpiride is 2400mg.

How should amisulpride or sulpiride be taken?

Both amisulpride and sulpiride are usually taken twice a day. However, you and your prescriber may decide that it is better for you to take the medicine in some other way. The dosing schedule will be carefully selected for you.

What form does amisulpride or sulpiride come in?

Amisulpride and sulpiride are available as tablets and liquid. Amisulpride tablets are available as 50mg, 100mg, 200mg and 400mg. The liquid is 100mg per ml. Sulpiride tablets are available as 200mg and 400mg. The liquid is 200mg per 5ml.

What should be done if a dose is missed?

If you forget a dose, take it as soon as you remember, as long as it is within a few hours of the usual time. If you miss a whole day's dose – just carry on as normal with the usual dose the following day. If you miss more than a day's dose, speak to your prescriber.

What will happen when amisulpride or sulpiride is first taken?

Amisulpride and sulpiride, like many medicines, do not work straight away. For example, it may take several days or even weeks for some symptoms to improve. To begin with, some people find that amisulpride or sulpiride may help them feel more alert and less sedated. Later, (usually in two or three weeks) other symptoms should begin to improve. Many people do not experience any side effects. However some people may experience some side effects. We have listed potential side effects in the table below, whether or not they are likely to be short or long-term and what measures can be taken is also described. There are other possible side effects – we have listed only the most important ones. Ask your doctor, pharmacist or nurse if you are worried about anything else that you think might be a side effect. Further information on side effects is available in the official manufacturer's leaflet.

Reporting side effects

The 'Yellow Card' scheme encourages patients to report any side effects that they feel may be caused by their medication. Ask your doctor, pharmacist, or nurse for the forms if you wish to report any side effects. Alternatively, telephone 0800 100 3352 or go to www.mhra.gov.uk.

Is amisulpride or sulpiride addictive?

No, neither amisulpride nor sulpiride are addictive. However, if you stop taking the medicine suddenly, you may experience unpleasant physical feelings.

What about alcohol?

It is recommended that people taking amisulpride or sulpiride should not drink alcohol. This is because both antipsychotics and alcohol can cause drowsiness. If the two are taken together, severe drowsiness can result. This can lead to falls and accidents. As well as this, drinking alcohol may make psychosis worse. However, once people are used to taking medication, then *very small amounts* of alcohol may not be harmful. It pays to be very careful, because alcohol affects people in different ways, especially when they are taking medication. Never drink alcohol and drive. Discuss any concerns you may have with your doctor, pharmacist or nurse.

Is it OK to stop taking amisulpride or sulpiride when symptoms go away?

No. If you stop taking amisulpride or sulpiride, your original symptoms are very likely to return. Most people need to be on antipsychotics for quite a long time, sometimes years. You should always discuss any plans you have to reduce or stop any of your prescribed medicines with your prescriber.

Are there any alternatives to amisulpride or sulpiride?

Yes, there are alternatives available. Overall, antipsychotics have broadly similar therapeutic effects, except for clozapine which is effective when other antipsychotics have failed. Antipsychotics differ in their side effects. With the range of medicines now available, a suitable and acceptable antipsychotic can usually be found for everyone.

Summary of side effects

| Side effect | Side effect |
|---|---|
| <p>Insomnia - Common</p> <p>What can be done about it? Discuss with your prescriber. The time of your dose may need to be changed or the dose may be reduced initially. Sometimes a sleeping tablet might be prescribed for a short while.</p>  | <p>Menstrual changes (women), periods may stop or become erratic – Common</p> <p>What can be done about it? Discuss with your prescriber. This side effect does not lessen over time. Treatment may be switched to another medicine which does not cause this side effect.</p>  |
| (Other less common) side effects | How common is it and what can be done about it? |
| Loss of sexual desire (men and women) | Uncommon Any changes should be reported to your prescriber. Treatment may be switched to another medicine which does not cause this side effect. |
| Impotence (men) - difficulty in getting an erection | Uncommon Any changes should be reported to your prescriber. Treatment may be switched to another medicine which does not cause this side effect. |
| Swelling of breasts and breast milk production (men and women) | Uncommon Any changes should be reported to your prescriber. Treatment may be switched to another medicine which does not cause this side effect. |
| Movement disorder - trembling, muscle spasms. | Uncommon Another medicine may be prescribed to treat this. Treatment may be switched to another medicine which does not cause this side effect. |
| Agitation and anxiety (sometimes called akathisia) | Uncommon Discuss with your prescriber. These feelings may reduce and wear off over time. It may be necessary to prescribe another medication or an alternative can be prescribed. |
| Weight gain | Uncommon Some people put on a few pounds. Try to eat healthily and take exercise. |
| Abnormal movements (sometimes known as tardive dyskinesia) | Rare This occurs only after long term treatment. It usually begins with unusual movements of the tongue and mouth. Treatment may be switched to another medicine which is less likely to cause this side effect. Symptoms may go away when switched to another medicine. |

Very common = almost everyone affected
Rare = few people affected

Common = many people affected
Very rare = very few or no one affected

Uncommon = some people affected

Disclaimer

This leaflet is to help you understand more about your medication. This is not an official manufacturer's Patient Information Leaflet (see <http://www.medicines.org.uk/emc/>). Remember, leaflets like this can only describe some of the effects of medication. You may also find other books or leaflets useful. If you have access to the internet you may find a lot of information there as well, but be careful, as internet based information is not always accurate. If in doubt consult your GP or a health care professional.

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