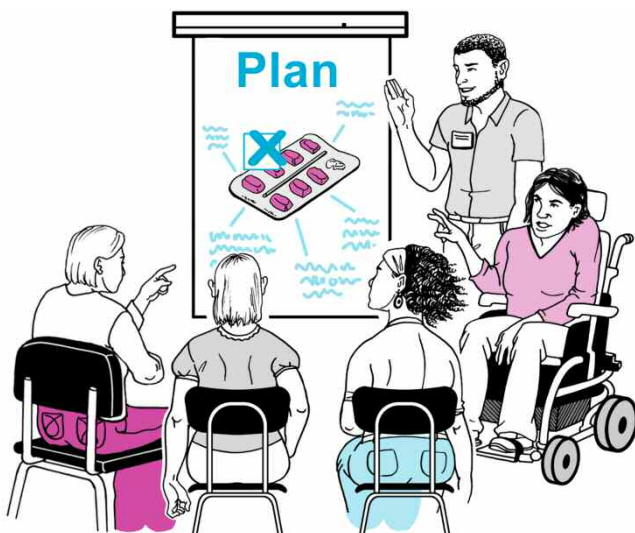


Advice for patients, families and carers



On 14 July 2015, reports came out which showed that strong medicines called ‘antipsychotics’ and other medicines to treat mental illness were being used to treat people with learning disabilities when they should not have been.



NHS England is leading an urgent ‘call to action’ to bring together professionals and patients groups and agree a plan to make sure this stops happening.



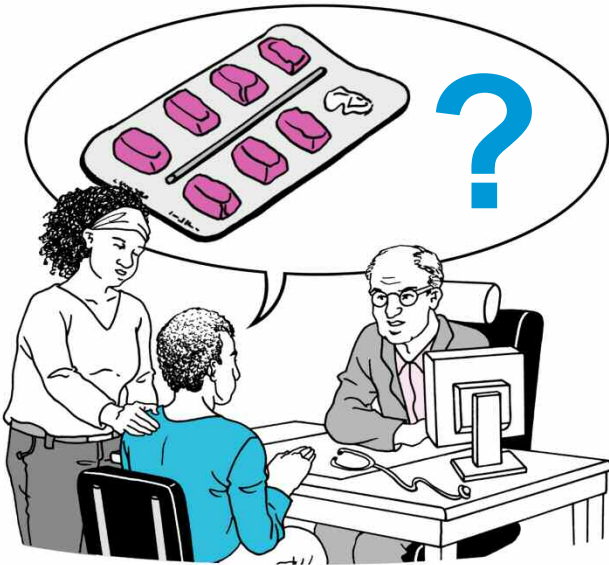
Because there is an urgent concern for the safety of patients being treated with these drugs, we have produced the following advice and information.

Help and Advice



Firstly, it's important that you don't stop taking any medicines or change them without professional medical advice first because this could be dangerous.

If you are worried for yourself or someone you know about the medicines being taken please talk to the person prescribing these medicines as soon as possible and ask for them to be reviewed.

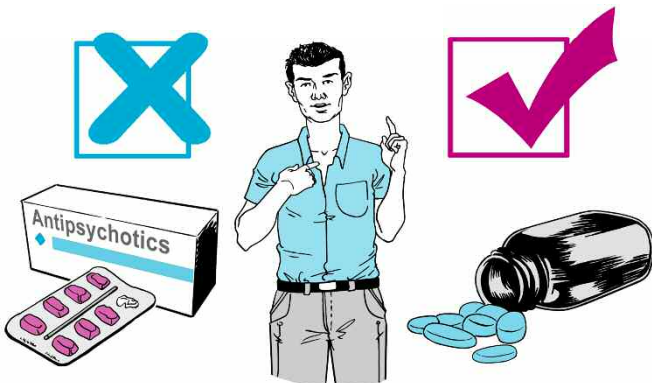


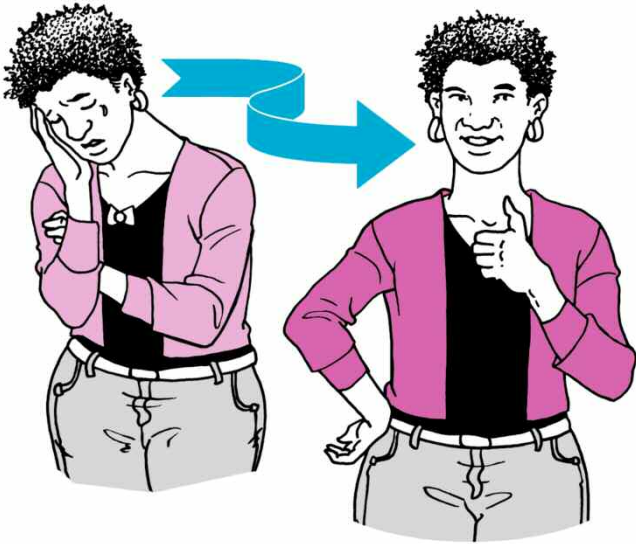
This will usually be a GP, specialist doctor, pharmacist, psychiatrist or nurse prescriber.



Please remember:

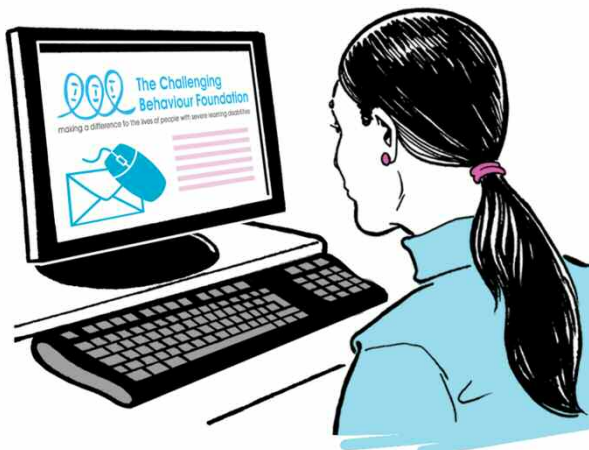
- not all medicines that are prescribed to people with learning disabilities are medicines to treat mental illnesses, such as antipsychotics





- medicines used to treat mental illness can be very effective in treating some people with learning disabilities when they are prescribed right

Other sources of information:

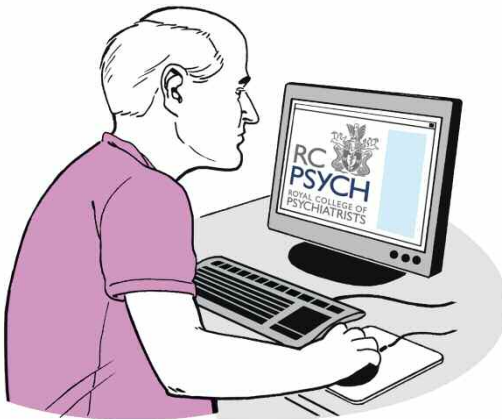


Challenging Behaviour Foundation (CBF) has a helpline for people with a severe learning disability and families and carers to call for help and advice:

Call **0300 666 0126**, during working hours. All calls will be treated confidentially.

Or email **support@thecbf.org.uk**

Or visit the Challenging Behaviour Foundation website:
www.challengingbehaviour.org.uk



National Autistic Society

Our Helpline: **0808 800 4104**

Lines are open 10am-4pm, Monday to Friday (free from landlines and most mobiles).

Or there is also information on our website at:

www.autism.org.uk/helpline.

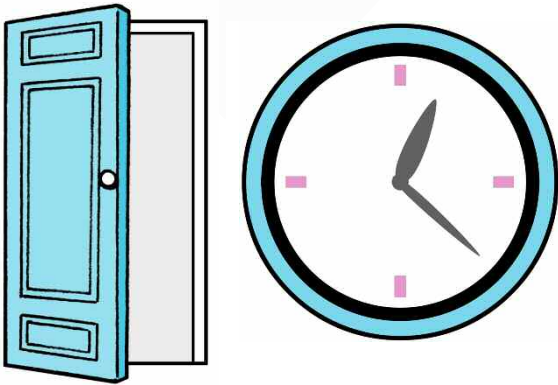
More information can also be found at the **Royal College of Psychiatrists'** website:

www.rcpsych.ac.uk/healthadvice/atozindex.aspx

NHS England

You can contact our Customer Contact Centre:

By telephone: **0300 311 22 33**



Email:

england.contactus@nhs.net

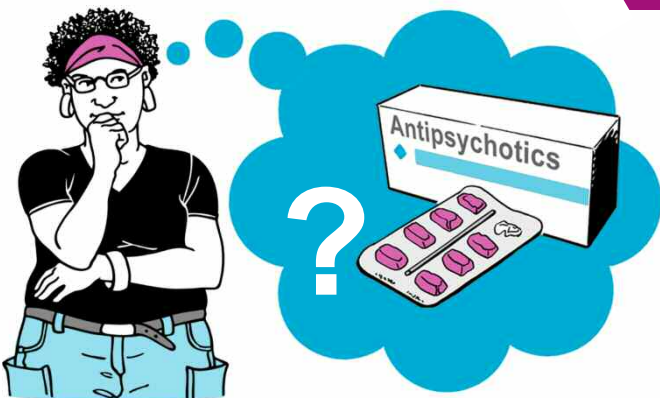
Post:

**NHS England,
PO Box 16738,
Redditch, B97 9PT**

Our opening hours are:

- Monday – Tuesday 8am to 6pm
- Wednesday 9.30 am to 6pm
- Thursday – Friday 8am to 6pm
- We are closed at weekends and bank holidays.

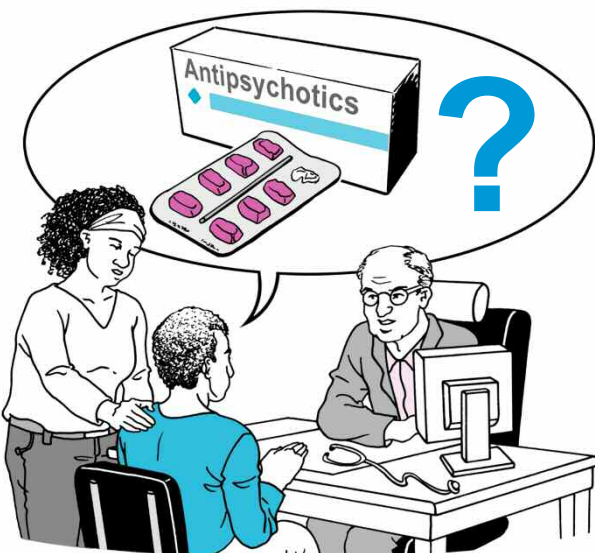
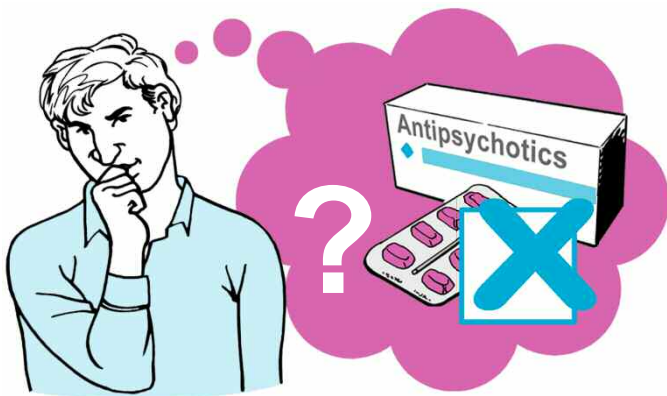
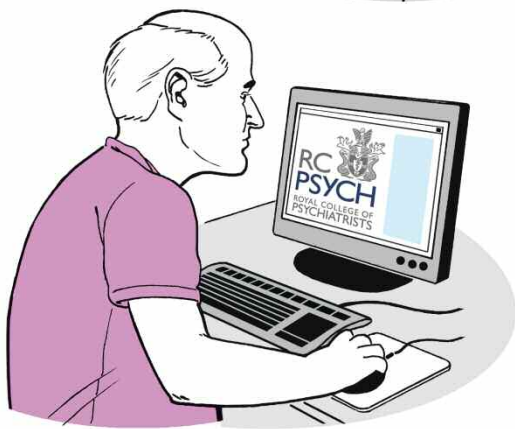
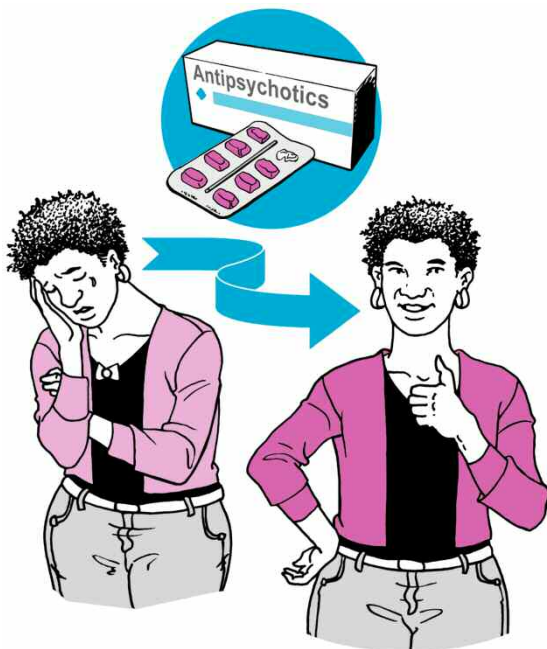
Common Questions



What are antipsychotic medicines and what are they prescribed for?

Antipsychotics are the name for a lot of different kinds of medications that are used to treat some types of mental distress or disorder.



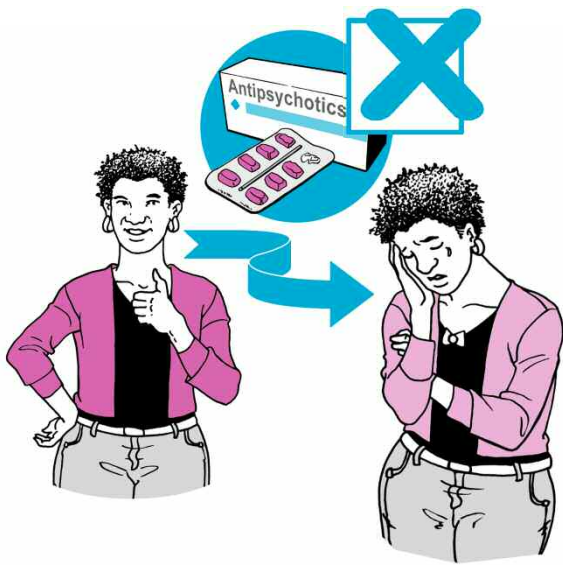


They are mainly used to treat schizophrenia and manic depression (bipolar disorder) but they can also be used to help severe anxiety or depression.

More information can be found at the Royal College of Psychiatrists' [website](#).

Should I stop taking my medicines?

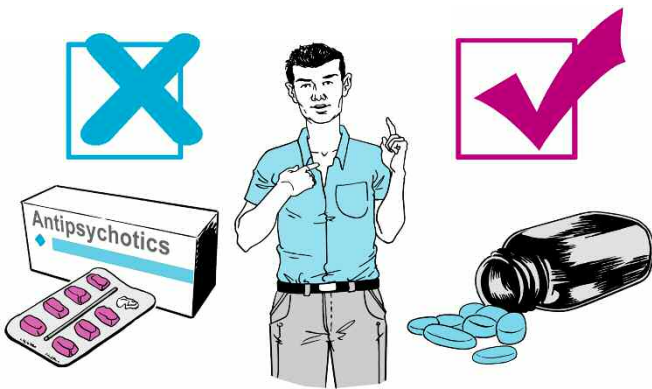
No, you should not stop taking any medicines that you have been prescribed without talking to the doctor, pharmacist, psychiatrist or nurse who prescribed them.



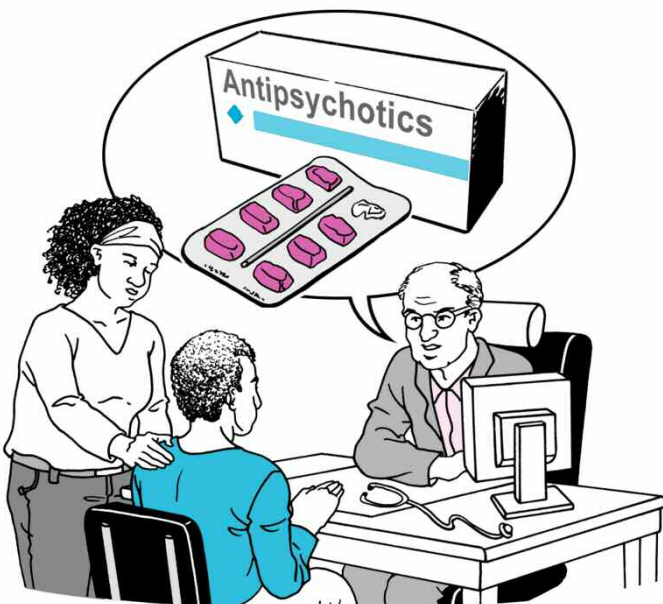
To stop taking medicines without taking advice first could be dangerous.



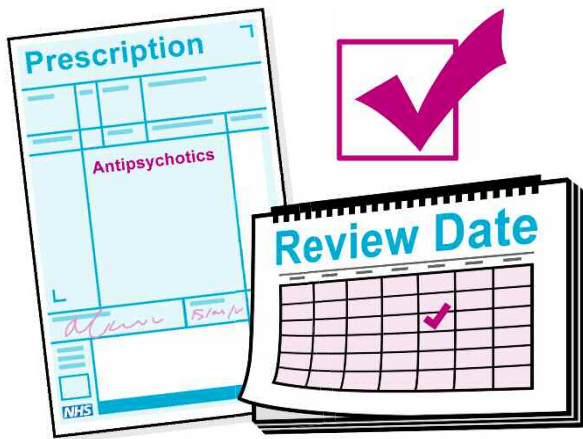
Are all people with a learning disability prescribed antipsychotic medicines or other medicines to treat mental illness?



No, not all people with a learning disability are prescribed medicines to treat mental illness.



If the doctor finds a need for these medicines and has discussed the risks and benefits with the patient and/or their parent or carer, it may be right to treat patients with learning disabilities with antipsychotic medicine.

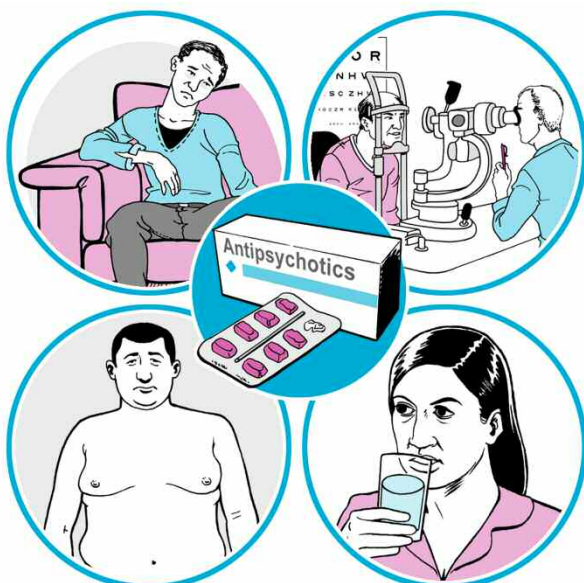
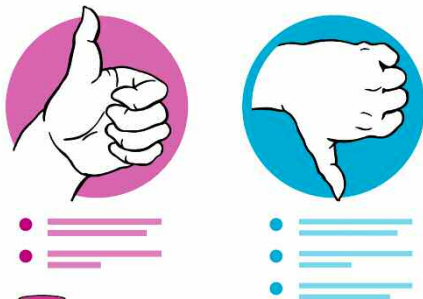


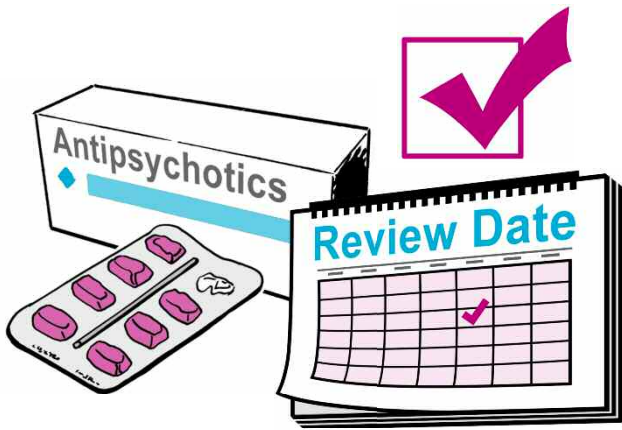
It's important that prescriptions for these medicines are reviewed regularly.

Is my health at risk if I'm taking these medicines?

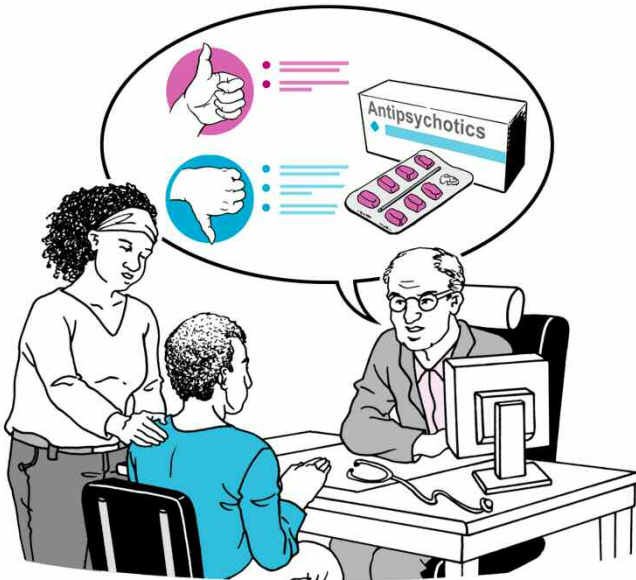
Medicines have benefits and they can also have side effects.

Antipsychotics and other medicines to treat mental illness can have serious side effects.

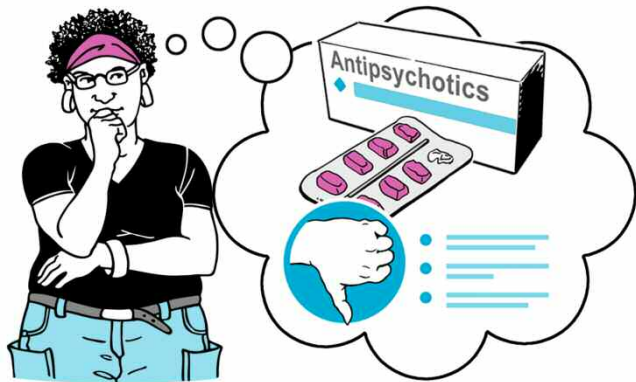




This means it's extra important to make sure these medicines are needed, are working and that their side effects are reviewed regularly.

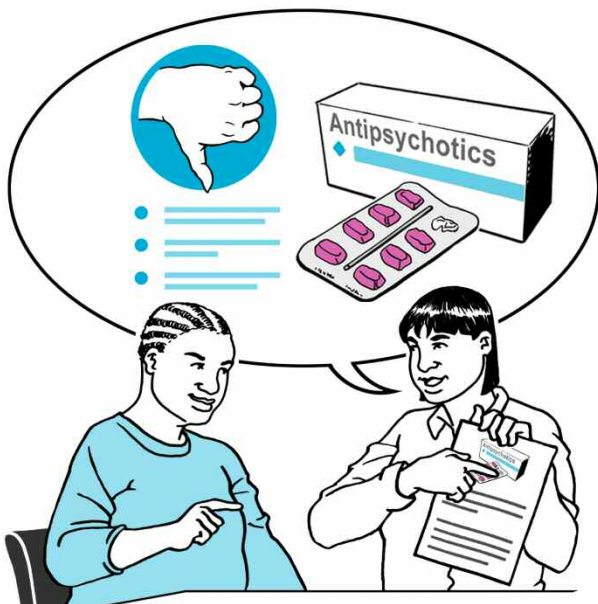


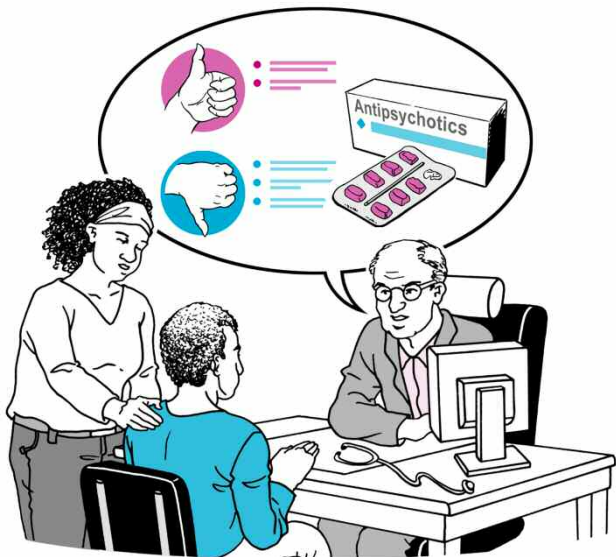
It's important that the person prescribing that medicine discusses with the patient and/or their parent/carer the risks and benefits of any medication.



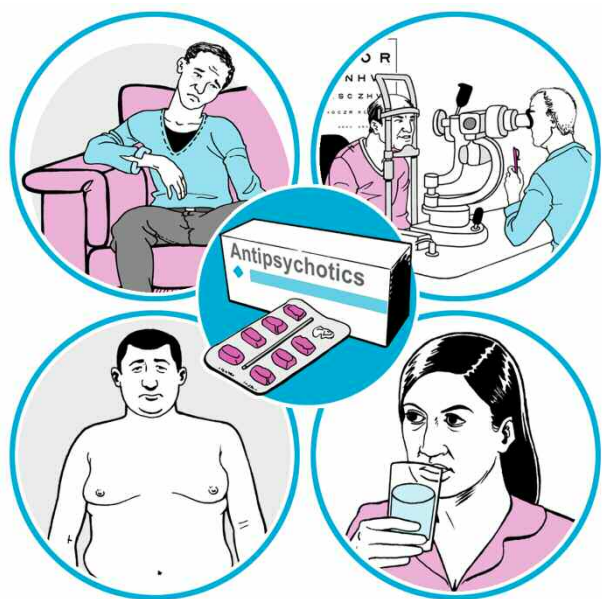
What are the side effects?

These medicines can have serious side effects for many people who take them, which should have been explained to you or your family/carer before taking them.

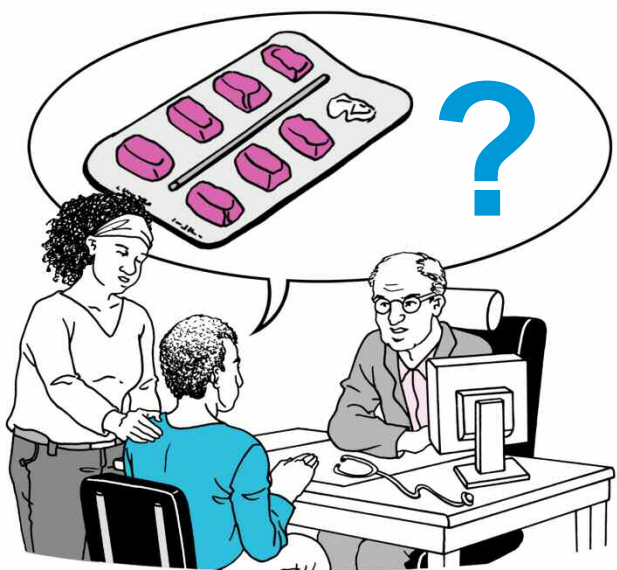




That's why the risks and benefits of taking these medicines needs to be carefully discussed before they are prescribed and why it's important that they are reviewed regularly and you or your family/carer are involved in decisions to prescribe them and in subsequent reviews.



Some of the side effects for using these sorts of medicines can be: difficulty in moving or awkward movements; being tired or sleepy; putting on weight and problems such as blurred eyesight or a dry mouth.



Please discuss any concerns you have with your doctor, pharmacist, psychiatrist or nurse who prescribes your medicines.