



Some three million Americans have schizophrenia, a brain disorder characterized by disorganized thinking, agitation, and delusions. Another five million have bipolar disorder, the hallmark of which is sharp swings between very high moods—called mania—and very low moods—called depression. Drugs called antipsychotics are commonly used to treat people with these conditions, but choosing the right one can be a challenge.

To help patients, their families, and their doctors choose an antipsychotic, *Consumer Reports* has evaluated the drugs in this category based on their effectiveness, safety, and cost. This 2-page brief is a summary of a free 21-page report you can access on the Internet at ConsumerReportsHealth.org/BestBuyDrugs.

WHO NEEDS AN ANTIPSYCHOTIC?

Most people diagnosed with schizophrenia should try an antipsychotic. The drugs can help people with this condition live more meaningful, stable lives with fewer or no periods of hospitalization. Antipsychotics can also help people with bipolar disorder, but other types of drugs are better for the long-term management of that condition.

Our independent evaluations are based on scientific reviews conducted by the Oregon Health and Science University-based Drug Effectiveness Review Project. Grants from the Engelberg Foundation and the National Library of Medicine help fund *Consumer Reports Best Buy Drugs*. These materials were made possible by a grant from the state Attorney General Consumer and Prescriber Education Grant Program, which is funded by the multi-state settlement of consumer fraud claims regarding the marketing of the prescription drug Neurontin (gabapentin).

Our Recommendations

Antipsychotics can be effective for treating schizophrenia, but many people who take them receive little or no benefit or only a partial reduction in symptoms. Side effects also pose a major barrier to continuous use. Older, less expensive antipsychotics can work just as well as newer, more costly ones.

Taking effectiveness, safety, side effects, patient variability, dosing convenience, and cost into account, we have chosen the following as *Consumer Reports Best Buy Drugs*:

- **Generic perphenazine** – for people with schizophrenia who are not satisfied with their current treatment and whose doctor thinks perphenazine is worth a try. People taking perphenazine should be monitored closely for muscle tremors and spasms.
- **Generic risperidone** – for people with schizophrenia who take perphenazine first and get minimal benefit and/or experience intolerable side effects.
- **Olanzapine (Zyprexa)** – for certain people with schizophrenia who take perphenazine first and receive no benefit (or a minimal one) and/or experience intolerable side effects. Not a good option for people who are overweight or have blood sugar abnormalities, diabetes, or heart disease.
- **Generic clozapine** – for people with moderate to severe schizophrenia who had little to no reduction in symptoms despite trying two or more antipsychotics.

Generic perphenazine—if a person responds well to it—could save you thousands of dollars each year compared to Zyprexa and Risperdal, the brand-name version of risperidone, depending on the dose required.

We are unable to select an antipsychotic as a *Best Buy* for people with bipolar disorder. There is not enough evidence to do so.

This information was last updated in August 2009.

Side Effects of Antipsychotics

Minor to severe

These can diminish or disappear over time, or be reduced if dose is lowered. Most people have more than one of these.

- Abnormal body movements, muscle twitches, tremors
- Blurred vision
- Constipation
- Dizziness
- Dry mouth
- Rapid heartbeat
- Sexual dysfunction
- Slurred speech

May be serious

These may require discontinuing the drug; in some cases, can become permanent.

- **Agranulocytosis**—decrease in disease-fighting white blood cells, which can lead to serious or fatal infections. (This risk is associated primarily with clozapine—regular blood tests are required with use—but it has also been reported with other antipsychotics.)
- **Changes in metabolism** that can lead to diabetes and a higher risk of heart disease and stroke.
- **Myocarditis**—an inflammation of the heart muscle that can be fatal. This risk associated primarily with clozapine.
- **Neuroleptic Malignant Syndrome**—characterized by high fever, increased heart rate, and blood pressure; can be fatal.
- **Seizures**
- **Significant weight gain**—7 percent or greater increase in body weight. Generally this is about 12 pounds or more.
- **Tardive dyskinesia**—characterized by uncontrollable body movement that may include tremors and spasms.

The Antipsychotic Drugs — Cost Comparison¹

The older drugs are in italics. The newer ones are in regular text.²

	Generic Name and Strength	Brand Name	Number of tablets or capsules per day ³	Total Daily Dose	Average Monthly Cost ⁴
	Aripiprazole 10 mg tablet	Abilify	One	10 mg	\$589
	<i>Chlorpromazine 200 mg tablet</i>	Generic	One	200 mg	\$23
CR BEST BUY	Clozapine 100 mg tablet	Generic	Three	300 mg	\$279
	Clozapine 100 mg tablet	Clozaril	Three	300 mg	\$690
CR BEST BUY	Clozapine 200 mg tablet	Generic	Two	400 mg	\$398
	Clozapine 100 mg dissolvable tablet	Fazaclo ODT	Three	300 mg	\$618
	<i>Haloperidol 0.5 mg tablet</i>	Generic	Two-Three	1 - 1.5 mg	\$14 - \$21
	lloperidone 8 mg tablet	Fanapt	Two	16 mg	Price not available
	<i>Loxapine 50 mg capsule</i>	Generic	One	50 mg	\$68
	<i>Molindone 50 mg tablet</i>	Moban	Two	100 mg	\$260
CR BEST BUY	Olanzapine 10 mg tablet	Zyprexa	One	10 mg	\$546
	Olanzapine 10 mg dissolvable tablet	Zyprexa, Zydys	One	10 mg	\$641
	Paliperidone 6 mg sustained-release tablet	Invega	One	6 mg	\$532
CR BEST BUY	<i>Perphenazine 2 mg tablet</i>	Generic	Three	6 mg	\$75
CR BEST BUY	<i>Perphenazine 4 mg tablet</i>	Generic	Three	12 mg	\$102
CR BEST BUY	<i>Perphenazine 8 mg tablet</i>	Generic	Three	24 mg	\$117
	Quetiapine 100 mg tablet	Seroquel	Three	300 mg	\$549
CR BEST BUY	Risperidone 1 mg tablet	Generic	Two	2 mg	\$256
	Risperidone 1 mg dissolvable tablet	Generic	Two	2 mg	\$406
	Risperidone 1 mg tablet	Risperdal	Two	2 mg	\$450
	<i>Thiothixene 10 mg capsule</i>	Generic	Two-Three	20 - 30 mg	\$34 - \$51
	<i>Trifluoperazine 5 mg</i>	Generic	Three	15 mg	\$66
	Ziprasidone 20 mg capsule	Geodon	Two	40 mg	\$538
	Ziprasidone 60 mg capsule	Geodon	Two	120 mg	\$628
	Ziprasidone 80 mg capsule	Geodon	Two	160 mg	\$622

1. Selected doses are listed due to space limitations. For a more complete listing, see our full report at: ConsumerReportsHealth.org/BestBuyDrugs.

2. For the first-generation drugs: names are listed in italics - only the monthly costs of the generics are given, except for molindone (Moban); no generic of Moban is yet available. Over 90 percent of the prescriptions for these drugs are generic.

3. As typically prescribed for schizophrenia. The dose ranges come from the FDA-approved labels (package inserts) for these drugs. All the antipsychotics are prescribed in a wide range of doses to meet patients' individual needs. Most people are started on low doses to gauge their response and experience of side effects. The dose is then usually increased, sometimes substantially. We have used the dose that the drugs' labels have stated as being effective for most patients.

4. Prices reflect nationwide retail average for May 2009, rounded to the nearest dollar. Information derived by *Consumer Reports Best Buy Drugs* from data provided by Wolters Kluwer Health, Pharmaceutical Audit Suite®. Wolters Kluwer Health is not involved in our analysis or recommendations.

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