



Our Recommendations

Some three million Americans have schizophrenia, a brain disorder characterized by disorganized thinking, agitation, and delusions. Another 5 million have bipolar disorder, often called “manic depression.” Drugs called antipsychotics are commonly used to treat people with these conditions. Some were first marketed in the 1950s. Six drugs that work somewhat differently became available in the 1990s.

To help patients, their families, and their doctors choose an antipsychotic medicine, *Consumers Reports* has evaluated the drugs in this category based on their effectiveness, safety, and cost. This 2-page brief is a summary of a 19-page report you can access on the Internet at www.CRBestBuyDrugs.org. You can also learn about other drugs we’ve analyzed on this free Web site. 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 National Library of Medicine help fund

Consumer Reports Best Buy Drugs.

WHO NEEDS AN ANTIPSYCHOTIC?

Most people diagnosed with schizophrenia should try an antipsychotic. The drugs help many people live more meaningful, stable lives with fewer – and sometimes no – periods of hospitalization. Antipsychotics can also help people with bipolar disorder, but other kinds of drugs are better for the long-term management of that condition. Antipsychotics are less proven in treating people with other psychiatric illnesses. And new research indicates that the risks posed by antipsychotics outweigh the benefits in treating people with Alzheimer’s disease.

Antipsychotics can be effective, but a sizeable percentage of people with schizophrenia who take them get little or no benefit while others get only a partial reduction in symptoms. Side effects also pose a major barrier to continuous use. In studies, for example, three of every four people stopped taking an antipsychotic or switched to a different one within 18 months.

Side effects, which differ from drug to drug, include blurred vision, slurred speech, dizziness, dry mouth, constipation, significant weight gain, seizures, and abnormal muscle movements.

Older, less expensive antipsychotic drugs 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 newly diagnosed with schizophrenia and for people who did poorly on any other antipsychotic.
- *Olanzapine (Zyprexa)* – for people with schizophrenia who try perphenazine first and get minimal or no benefit. Not a good option for people who are overweight, have blood sugar abnormalities, diabetes, or heart disease.
- *Risperidone (Risperdal)* – for people with schizophrenia who try perphenazine first and get minimal benefit or no benefit, or experience intolerable side effects.
- *Generic clozapine* – for people with moderate to severe schizophrenia who have not responded at all to two or more other antipsychotics and have had little reduction in symptoms.

Generic perphenazine saves about \$200 to \$500 a month compared to Zyprexa and Risperdal, depending on the dose required.

We make no choice of a *Best Buy* antipsychotic for people with bipolar disorder. There is not enough evidence to do so.

This information was last updated in November 2006.

The Antipsychotic Drugs Compared

Drug Generic name (Brand Name)	Discontinuation Rate Over 18 Months – Stopped Taking the Medicine	Hospitalized for Worsening Schizophrenia	Treatment Didn't Work	Intolerable Side Effects ¹	Serious Side Effects ²	Significant Weight Gain ³	Prolactin Elevation ⁴
Olanzapine (Zyprexa)	68%	11%	15%	18%	10%	30%	No
Quetiapine (Seroquel)	82%	20%	28%	15%	9%	16%	No
Risperidone (Risperdal)	76%	15%	27%	10%	10%	14%	Yes
Ziprasidone (Geodon)	80%	18%	24%	15%	10%	7%	No
Perphenazine (Generic) ⁵	75%	16%	25%	16%	11%	12%	No

Note: The results presented in this table are based on one landmark study, called the Clinical Antipsychotic Trials of Intervention Effectiveness, or CATIE for short. CATIE is the most comprehensive study comparing the antipsychotics. The results were published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* on September 22, 2005; Vol. 353, No. 12; pages 1209-1223. (1) Usually led to stopping the drug right away. (2) Usually required reducing the dose or stopping the medicine, or treatment for the side effect. (3) Reflects only those who gained 7 percent or more of starting body weight. (4) Elevations in prolactin can lead to sexual and reproductive difficulties and abnormalities in breast glands for both women and men. (5) Perphenazine is one of the older antipsychotics first developed in the 1950s.

Selected Antipsychotic Drugs – Doses and Costs¹

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

	Generic Name and Dose	Brand Name ²	Frequency of Use Per Day ³	Total Daily Dose	Average Monthly Cost ⁴
	Aripiprazole 15mg tablet	Abilify	One	15mg	\$469
	Aripiprazole 20mg tablet	Abilify	One	20mg	\$661
	<i>Chlorpromazine 50mg tablet</i>	Generic	One-Three	50mg-150mg	\$17-\$51
	<i>Chlorpromazine 100mg tablet</i>	Generic	One-Three	100mg-300mg	\$21-\$63
CR BEST BUY	Clozapine 50mg tablet	Generic	One-Three	50mg-150mg	\$65-\$195
CR BEST BUY	Clozapine 25mg dissolvable tablet	Fazaclo	One-Three	25mg-75mg	\$52-\$156
	<i>Haloperidol 5mg tablet</i>	Generic	One-Three	5mg-15mg	\$21-\$62
	<i>Haloperidol 10mg tablet</i>	Generic	One-Two	10mg-20mg	\$38-\$76
	<i>Loxapine 25mg capsule</i>	Generic	One-Three	25mg-75mg	\$50-\$150
CR BEST BUY	Olanzapine 10mg tablet	Zyprexa	One	10mg	\$418
	Olanzapine 10mg dissolvable tablet	Zyprexa Zydis	One	10mg	\$494
	<i>Molindone 25mg tablet</i>	Moban	One-Three	50mg-75mg	\$105-\$315
CR BEST BUY	<i>Perphenazine 4mg tablet</i>	Generic	Two-Four	8mg-16mg	\$48-\$96
CR BEST BUY	<i>Perphenazine 8mg tablet</i>	Generic	Two-Four	16mg-32mg	\$56-\$112
	Quetiapine 100mg tablet	Seroquel	Two	200mg	\$266
	Quetiapine 200mg tablet	Seroquel	Two	400mg	\$502
CR BEST BUY	Risperidone 1mg tablet	Risperdal	Two	2mg	\$318
	Risperidone 1mg dissolvable tablet	Risperdal	Two	2mg	\$396
CR BEST BUY	Risperidone 2mg tablet	Risperdal	Two	4mg	\$520
	Risperidone 2mg dissolvable tablet	Risperdal	Two	4mg	\$638
	<i>Thiothixene 5mg capsule</i>	Generic	One-Three	5mg-15mg	\$15-\$45
	<i>Trifluoperazine 5mg</i>	Generic	One-Three	5mg-15mg	\$22-\$66
	Ziprasidone 40mg capsule	Geodon	Two	80mg	\$398
	Ziprasidone 60mg capsule	Geodon	Two	120mg	\$406

1. This table presents a sampling of drugs at specific doses. For a comprehensive list with these medicines at all dose strengths, and their prices, see the full antipsychotics report at www.CRBestBuyDrugs.org.
2. For the older drugs – whose 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. For clozapine, only the generic is listed.
3. Dose range recommendations are derived from the American Psychiatric Association Schizophrenia Reference Guide, *The Medical Letter – Treatment Guidelines for Antipsychotic Drugs* (June 2006, Issue 46) and *Consumer Reports Consumer Drug Reference* (2006 Edition). Most people are started on low doses to gauge their response and experience of side effects. The dose is then usually increased.
4. Prices reflect nationwide retail average for September 2006; rounded to the nearest dollar. Information derived by *Consumer Reports Best Buy Drugs* from data provided by Wolters Kluwer Health, Pharmaceutical Audit Suite.