

# Antipsychotic Drug Use and Dementia



## *Are these drugs really necessary?*

These drugs were **not** developed to control behaviors with dementia, so why use them for such?

## Review the Side Effects of Antipsychotic Medication for Dementia

- Some antipsychotics cause a decrease in white blood cell production that can lead to serious infections.
- Some antipsychotics can cause a decrease in blood pressure when changing positions. They can also cause dizziness, rapid heart rate and drowsiness.
- Antipsychotics can cause irreversible, involuntary muscle movements.
- Antipsychotics can cause weight gain, cataracts, increased concentration of cholesterol and triglycerides and increased blood sugar levels.

## Antipsychotic Medications are for Major Psychiatric Illnesses

- Antipsychotic medications are for managing major psychiatric illnesses such as schizophrenia.
- **The scientific benefit for use of these medications for Alzheimer's disease or dementia has not been established.**
- These medications have side effects that can cause weight gain, a rise in blood sugar, irregularities of the heart and increased cholesterol levels.
- They also significantly increase the risk of death in an older person.
- **In older nursing home residents with dementia, the use of antipsychotic medications increases the relative risk of death by 70 percent.<sup>1</sup>**

## Antipsychotics are not for Dementia

- For every 100 residents with dementia treated with antipsychotic medications, only 9-25 will benefit and 1 will die.<sup>2</sup>
- **Many nursing home residents with dementia are prescribed antipsychotic medication to control behaviors, but it only sedates them.**
- The actual cause of a disruptive behavior is rarely discovered or documented prior to starting antipsychotic medications.

*Each nursing home provides unique solutions for families of residents with dementia.  
See what your home can do to help you and your loved one today.*



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<sup>1,2</sup>Independent Drug Information Service and The Alosa Foundation. "Restrained use of antipsychotic medications: Rational management of irrationality." 2012.  
[http://www.rxfacts.org/professionals/Antipsychotics\\_UnAd.pdf](http://www.rxfacts.org/professionals/Antipsychotics_UnAd.pdf)