

Dementia Antipsychotic Prescribing Guide

Monitoring for Response and Adverse Effects

Monitoring for Response

-**Clearly document** treatment target symptoms. If the drug does not help, discontinue the drug. These symptoms may also change over time, with or without drug treatment.

-**Do not expect an immediate response.** Sedation may explain much of any immediate effect that is seen. Response may take 2-4 weeks.

-**Do not increase doses too quickly** if the patient doesn't respond right away. At a stable dose, drug blood levels may rise for several days to a week or more before reaching a steady state level.

Increased doses lead to increased side effects.

Monitoring for Adverse Effects

Other possible adverse effects include: falls, constipation, urinary tract infection, urinary incontinence or retention, stroke, arrhythmias, and neuroleptic malignant syndrome.

Side Effect	Monitoring
<i>Movement Side Effects</i>	Observation for tremor, gait changes, difficulty swallowing, signs of parkinsonism, restlessness (akathisia), unusual movements (tardive dyskinesia).
	Abnormal Involuntary Movement Scale (AIMS) at baseline, every 6 months, or if movement side effects are suspected.
<i>Central Nervous System</i>	
Sedation	Observation, sedation scale if needed.
Confusion, delirium, or other cognitive worsening	Observation for mental status or behavior changes.
	Delirium screening tool, e.g. CAM (Confusion Assessment Method) if delirium is suspected.
Psychotic symptoms	Observation for worsening symptoms.
<i>Cardiovascular / Metabolic</i>	
Orthostatic hypotension	Observation for signs of dizziness or falls.
	Orthostatic blood pressure (if feasible). Monthly, or if signs of dizziness occur. More frequent on initiation or after dose increase.
Edema	Observation for swelling of extremities.
Weight gain	Monthly weight. Consider weekly for 1 month if overweight. Watch for increased appetite.
Hyperglycemia / Diabetes	Blood glucose at baseline, 3 & 6 months, then q6 months. Also PRN symptoms or mental status change. Monitor symptoms: increased thirst, urination, hunger, weakness.
Triglyceride ↑	Fasting blood lipid panel at baseline, 3 & 6 months, then q6 months. Especially if patient has cardiovascular risk factors: e.g. obesity, diabetes, hyperlipidemia.