The Ins and Outs of Taking Antidepressants

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Finding the Right Depression Medication

Although there is no cure for depression, there are ways to manage the symptoms and antidepressants are often one of the first steps. However, finding the right medication can be difficult for some as there are a lot of factors.

Are Antidepressants Right for You?

If antidepressants are something that you're considering you should have an in-depth conversation with your doctor, as depression medication isn't right for everyone. If you've tried alternative therapies and haven't had much success, antidepressants may the right option; they could be enough to give you a boost back into your normal lifestyle and routine.

Sometimes an antidepressant can have the opposite effect and could actually make the depression worse. When starting a new medication, or increasing a dose, it's important to closely monitor your mood and behavior to ensure that you aren't having an adverse reaction to that particular antidepressant.

If you feel that the side effects are overwhelming, are having panic attacks, anxiety, or suffering from insomnia then talk to your doctor about switching to a different medication. If you find yourself having suicidal thoughts or feelings of self-harm, contact your physician or therapist immediately.

How to Find the Right Medication

Here are some things to consider when starting the search for the right medication:

- **Be Patient:** Most antidepressants take time to settle in to your system so relief of symptoms may not set in for a few weeks. It's important to be patient during this time because it may also take a few trials with different antidepressants before finding a medication that's suited to your needs.

- **Symptoms:** Those diagnosed with depression often suffer from many unpleasant symptoms and side effects, however not everybody has the same experience. Antidepressants are a great way to battle these symptoms but it's important to talk to your doctor about your specific symptoms and the severity of these symptoms so that they can narrow down which type of antidepressant would be best for you.

Next page: generic vs. name brand medication.

- **Side Effects:** Talk to your doctor and find out the typical side effects for your prescribed antidepressant. Some of the side effects can seem overwhelming at the beginning but should pass in time. If you are concerned about the side effects or feel that they outweigh your original symptoms then speak to your doctor, as you may need to try a different medication.

- **Drug Interactions:** Make sure that your physician knows about any other medications you are taking; due to the nature of antidepressants there could be some dangerous interactions. Your doctor may suggest taking one of the medications at a different time, or may decide it's best to prescribe something else. It's also important for your doctor to fully understand what other health conditions you have so they can appropriately prescribe an antidepressant that will work for you.

- **Family History:** If depression is something that runs in your family, it may be beneficial to ask what worked for your family members. Because you're genetically similar to your immediate family (parents and siblings) there is a good chance that an antidepressant that worked for them could work for you as well.

Generic vs. Brand Name Medication

Pharmaceutical advertisements and commercials would have you believe that if it isn't brand name, it's not going to work. In most cases this isn't true as the chemical make-up of the medications are the same. The generic version will have the same dosage, strengths, side effects and benefits as the brand name and will likely be more cost effective.

If you are concerned about the differences or have more questions about generic antidepressants over the brand name version, you should consult with your doctor or pharmacist.

Conclusion

Antidepressants can be a great way to battle the symptoms of depression and get you back into your regular routine and lifestyle. Not all antidepressants are a perfect fit so it's important to speak with your doctor about your specific symptoms, concerns, and medical history so that they can prescribe a medication that will work for you.

Be patient, especially when first starting out because it could take several weeks before you start to notice a difference and you may have to tolerate some unpleasant side effects in the meantime.

If you experience side effects that are overwhelming, or you feel like the medication is making your depression worse, speak to your doctor or therapist immediately as that particular antidepressant may not be right for you.