

Treating Patients with Schizophrenia and Comorbid Medical Conditions

Patients with major psychiatric disorders such as, Schizophrenia, Bipolar Disorder, and Major Depressive Disorder are often treated with second generation (atypical) antipsychotic medications. These psychiatric disorders and medications are associated with increased cardiometabolic risks, including Cardiovascular Disease and Diabetes Mellitus according to the American Diabetes Association® (ADA).

Coordination of Care

These patients benefit from the services of a multidisciplinary team of health care professionals. This team should be aware of their medical risks and provide regular monitoring for both their psychiatric disorders and comorbid medical conditions.

Information for all Clinicians

1. When prescribing antipsychotic medications, it is important to educate the patient about how the medication works
2. Ask your patients how their medication(s) are working
3. Encourage your patients to adhere to their medications and to not discontinue taking their medication without first speaking with their prescriber
4. For patients taking an antipsychotic medication, behavioral health practitioners should encourage and assist patients to be **screened for diabetes in the primary care setting**
5. For patients with a diagnosis of Schizophrenia and Diabetes, behavioral health practitioners should encourage and assist patients to have at least annual **cholesterol (LDL-C) and twice annual glucose testing (HbA1c test)**
6. For patients with Schizophrenia and Cardiovascular disease, behavioral health practitioners should encourage and assist patients to have **annual cholesterol testing**
7. Coordinate and exchange information with all prescribers and members of the patient's treatment team (See [Exchange of Information Form](#))

Cardiometabolic Risks Associated with Atypical Antipsychotics

Individuals taking atypical antipsychotic medications have increased risk of:

- Cardiac disease
- Weight gain
- Abdominal girth obesity
- Prediabetes
- Type II Diabetes

Resources and educational materials on antipsychotic medications and the risk of diabetes and cardiovascular disease for professionals and their patients can be found on the [ADA website](#).