

Best practices for children and adolescents on antipsychotics

Antipsychotic medications may serve as an effective treatment for a **narrowly defined set of psychiatric disorders**. Studies show that providers are increasingly prescribing these medications to pediatric patients with conditions such as ADHD, depression, anxiety disorders, behavioral disorders, and even insomnia.

For these nonprimary indications, **psychosocial care** is recommended as first-line treatment¹.

Examples of psychosocial care

- Behavioral Health Services – individual, family, and group psychotherapy
- Crisis intervention services
- Peer services
- Activity Therapy - music, art, or play therapy (not for recreation)

Helpful tools and resources

- A HEDIS® Overview is posted on providerexpress.com (Quality Assurance)
- liveandworkwell.com has relevant articles, resources, and education for your patients (use guest access code “clinician”)

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) advises that providers take great care and consideration before prescribing antipsychotic medications, given their adverse effects², which include:

- **Metabolic Syndrome**
- **Increased Prolactin Concentrations**
- **Extrapyramidal Symptoms**
- **Cardiovascular Changes**

Mental health referrals

- Call the provider phone number on the back of the patient’s health plan ID card or search liveandworkwell.com

Remember to ask for contact information for other treating providers to coordinate care. You may use this [form](#) to facilitate.

1. Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. Use of First-Line Psychosocial Care for Children and Adolescents on Antipsychotics (APP). Available at: <http://www.ahrq.gov>.

2. Liwei L. Hua, Elizabeth M. Alderman, Richard J. Chung, Laura K. Grubb, Janet Lee, Makia E. Powers, Krishna K. Upadhyya, Stephenie B. Wallace; COMMITTEE ON ADOLESCENCE, Collaborative Care in the Identification and Management of Psychosis in Adolescents and Young Adults. *Pediatrics* June 2021; 147 (6): e2021051486. 10.1542/peds.2021-051486

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