

Abilify

Drug Name -- Abilify

Alternate Names – Aripiprazole

Manufacturer – Bristol-Myers Squibb and Otsuka America Pharmaceuticals

Type – Prescription (Not Controlled) **FDA Black Box Warnings:** 1) Risk of death for elderly dementia-related psychosis patients; and, 2) increased risk of suicide and suicidal ideation when mixed with SSRI antidepressants in at least some age groups (which is its recommended usage for major depression).

Pregnancy Issues – This drug should not be used by pregnant women or women who are nursing.

Addiction Potential – Low. However, tolerance appears to develop due to negative effects from abrupt cessation of the drug. Further studies need to be conducted regarding physiological dependence.

Maximum Prescription Duration – Abilify is a long-term drug. Abilify takes between two and six weeks for full effectiveness.

Cautions – It is recommended by the manufacturers that Abilify should not be administered in dementia-related cases of psychosis. Abilify may cause death in such cases. It should not be administered to individuals with kidney or liver diseases, heart disease, high blood pressure, or heart rhythm problems; those who have had a heart attack or stroke; those who have a history of low white blood count; breast cancer; seizures or epilepsy; or diabetes. Do not drink alcohol while on Abilify. Abilify can cause a sudden change in heart rate and blood pressure. It may also impair judgment and reasoning. May cause swallowing problems. The drug should not be used if a person has had a suicide attempt or has suicidal ideations.

Drug Interactions/Adverse effects – Cold or allergy medicine; narcotics; sleeping pills; muscle relaxers; and medicine for seizures. Abilify should not be used with medications to treat high blood pressure or heart conditions; Tegretol; Luminol or Solfoton; Dilantin; Mycobutin, Rifadin, Rimactane or Rifater; Nizoral; Sporanox; Cardioquin or Quinaglute; Prozac, Luvox or Paxil.

Class – Antipsychotic (alters dopamine and serotonin)

Purpose – Schizophrenia, Bipolar I Disorder, Depression (add-on used in conjunction with SSRI antidepressants – See FDA Black Box Warning above)

Side Effects – Constipation, an inner sense of restlessness or need to move (akathisia), headache, nausea, upset stomach, vomiting, agitation, anxiety, insomnia, sleepiness, lightheadedness, and tremor; very high fever, rigid muscles, shaking, confusion, sweating, or increased heart rate and blood pressure. Abilify may cause neuroleptic malignant syndrome, which could be fatal. Other side effects include abnormal or uncontrollable movements. These may be signs of a serious condition called tardive dyskinesia which may be permanent. Elderly patients experience an increased potential for stroke (especially with dementia-related psychosis). Abilify increases blood sugar levels and should not be used by diabetics.

Studies have indicated that Abilify (and like drugs) can cause coma and death when administered to diabetics.

Withdrawals – The most significant reports regarding withdrawals associated with cessation of Abilify are related to the recurrence of symptoms associated with the reason for taking the drug in the first place.

Sources – Abilify.com, psyweb.com, drugs.com