Antipsychotic Monitoring
Patient Information Leaflet

Shining a light on the future
**Introduction**

Antipsychotic medications are used to help manage a number of different problems but they all have similar side effects. Our team will help you to manage any side-effects through regularly monitoring you whilst you are taking antipsychotic medications. This leaflet will explain:

- Why we monitor antipsychotics
- How we monitor antipsychotics
- When you will need to have monitoring

**Why we monitor**

Antipsychotic medications have a number of side-effects including:

- Sleepiness
- Weight gain
- Dizziness
- Problems with movement such as shakes, stiffness, slowness
- Sexual problems
- Breast tenderness
- Irregular periods/changes to your periods

You might not always be aware of side-effects if they are slight and you may not associate them with your medication, so it’s important we look for and monitor any side-effects.

Through monitoring we can:

- pick up and act on side-effects which affect your life.
- keep an eye on and act on changes increasing your risk of diabetes and heart disease
- monitor changes that might make it unsafe to carry on taking antipsychotic medications.
How we monitor
We have a Physical Health Clinic, staff at the clinic will monitor you whilst you are taking antipsychotic medication. They will check:

**Blood**
We do a range of blood tests which monitor your:
- Liver
- Kidneys
- Cholesterol and fat levels
- HbA1c – tells us about how well your body manages sugar levels
- Prolactin – a hormone that can go up in the body which causes sexual side effects and changes to your periods.

**Weight**
We monitor your weight and measure your waist circumference, as weight gain is associated with health problems.

**Heart health**
As well as the information from the blood tests we also do regular Electrocardiograms (ECGs). An ECG tells us about your heart rhythm. We get this by putting stickers over your chest and connecting these to the machine which then detects your heart rhythm.

**Side effect monitoring**
We will regularly ask you to complete a questionnaire about possible side effects.

**When we monitor**
Everyone prescribed antipsychotic medication is offered monitoring.

We’ll invite you for appointments at:
- Weekly monitoring for the first 6 weeks. The first appointment will be within two weeks of starting your medication
- Three months after starting medication
- 12 months after starting medication

After the first year you will only need to be monitored once a year for as long as you are prescribed antipsychotic medication.
Not all checks are necessary at each appointment. The table below tells you what checks to expect and when:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Blood tests</th>
<th>ECG</th>
<th>Body Mass Index (BMI)</th>
<th>Waist circumference</th>
<th>Side effects check</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Within 2 weeks of starting medication</strong></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Weekly for 5 weeks</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>3 months</strong></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>12 months</strong></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Yearly</strong></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*If you are prescribed Olanzapine 3 month checks take place again at 6 months and 9 months.

We recommend that you attend the monitoring clinics, but they are not compulsory. Sometimes there is value in remaining on the medications even where we do not have the full monitoring arrangements in place. As you are the decision maker in your care, we will be happy to discuss these arrangements with you and any aspect of the monitoring that you do not wish to take part in.

**Further information**
If you have any queries about your medication please contact the Pharmacy Medicines Information helpline, Tel: 0191 245 6604. The helpline is available 9am - 4.00pm Monday to Friday (excluding public holidays). A voicemail facility operates at all other times.

**What if I have a comment, suggestion, compliment or complaint about the service?**
If you want to make a comment, suggestion, compliment or complaint you can:
- talk to the people directly involved in your care
- ask a member of staff for a feedback form, or complete a form on the Trust website www.ntw.nhs.uk (click on the ‘Contact Us’ tab)
- telephone the Complaints Department Tel: 0191 245 6672
- We are always looking at ways to improve services. Your feedback allows us to monitor the quality of our services and act upon issues that you bring to our attention. You can provide feedback in the following ways:
  - the quickest way for you to do this is to complete our short online survey at www.ntw.nhs.uk/poy
  - complete a Points of You survey, available from staff.
References

- Physical Health Monitoring of Patients Prescribed Antipsychotics (NTW(C)29 – Trust Standard for the Assessment and Management of Physical Health)
- Psychosis and schizophrenia in adults: prevention and management Clinical guideline (CG178)
Further information about the content, reference sources or production of this leaflet can be obtained from the Patient Information Centre. If you would like to tell us what you think about this leaflet please get in touch.

This information can be made available in a range of formats on request (eg Braille, audio, larger print, easy read, BSL or other languages). Please contact the Patient Information Centre Tel: 0191 246 7288

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