



## Mid-Valley Behavioral Care Network

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### Asenapine (Saphris)

The medication Asenapine (**Saphris**) is an **atypical** neuroleptic. It is used to treat psychosis. Psychosis can be experienced as disorganized thinking or behavior and unusual perceptions (hearing voices, seeing things, feeling paranoid). Saphris is also used to treat mood instability associated with manic-depressive disorder also called Bipolar Affective Disorder. Symptoms including poor sleep, racing thoughts and severe mood swings can be reduced with Saphris. Generally these symptoms interfere with your life goals. There may be other reasons someone takes Saphris.

Saphris is FDA approved for adults for Schizophrenia and Bipolar Affective Disorder, acute and maintenance phases.

Although Saphris can be very helpful, it can cause some side effects that you should know of before accepting treatment with it. The most common include: **restlessness, muscle tension, numbing of the tongue**. Although these effects generally occur during initial treatment, some remain throughout treatment and may warrant discontinuing the medication. Talk with your provider about it.

Recently, neuroleptics have been found to be associated with diabetes and weight gain, high cholesterol, and high triglycerides. Though serious, these side effects are uncommon. Nevertheless, it is important to talk to your provider about these issues. Specifically, Saphris is very unlikely to cause problems in this area. Yet these issues have been observed with medications within the same class as Saphris.

Saphris is different from older **typical** neuroleptics in that it is less likely to cause EPS (ExtraPyramidal Side effects). But in the rare instances that these may occur they include resting tremor, muscle stiffness or spasms, abnormal movements of the mouth, tongue, extremities. These are usually benign and can be treated with side effect medication. Tardive Dyskinesia (unusual movements of the mouth, tongue, arms) and NMS (high fever, racing heart, agitation, sweating) although rare, are serious side effects of the older **typical** neuroleptics. These effects are considerably lower with Saphris.

The beneficial effect of Saphris can sometimes take 3-5 days to three weeks, sometimes longer. The maximum effect can sometimes take as long as 9-12 months. Generally if no effect is felt after 6 weeks, then a different medication or different dosage should be considered. The usual dosage range of Saphris is 10-20 mg a day. Saphris is best taken at night. It dissolves on your tongue, so you do not want to eat or drink for about 10 minutes after taking it. It tastes like a Black Cherry candy.

Saphris is generally safe with other medications. But as with all medications, please let your provider know if you are engaged in other treatments. There are no dietary restrictions with Saphris.

There are supplemental ways to improve life which include:

- exercise
- good sleep habits
- good eating habits
- yoga
- a hobby
- visiting with family or friends
- psychotherapy
- fish oil

Although important, these methods alone cannot restore clear thinking and stable mood.

If you have further questions about this medication, please ask your medical provider or your pharmacist.

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