



## Mid-Valley Behavioral Care Network

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### Quetiapine (Seroquel)

The medication Quetiapine (**Seroquel**) 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). Seroquel 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 Seroquel. Generally these symptoms interfere with your life goals. There may be other reasons someone takes Seroquel.

Seroquel is FDA approved for Schizophrenia in adults and adolescents and Bipolar Affective Disorder, acute and maintenance phases for adults and pediatric patients. It is also FDA approved for Bipolar Affective Disorder, depression.

Although Seroquel can be very helpful, it can cause some side effects that you should know of before accepting treatment with it. The most common include: **drowsiness, sedation and weight gain**. **Other side effects include dry mouth, constipation and headache**. 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, Seroquel is very unlikely to cause problems in this area. Yet these issues have been observed with medications within the same class as Seroquel.

Seroquel 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 Seroquel.

The beneficial effect of Seroquel 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 is wide and spans 200 mg to 800 mg/ day.

Seroquel 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 Seroquel.

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.

Original:	08/2011	Last reviewed:	06/2012				
		Last revised:	08/2011				