DRUG NAME: **ABILIFY**
Generic name: aripiprazole

**General Information:** Abilify is a unique antipsychotic drug approved by the FDA for treatment of bipolar disorder and schizophrenia. Its therapeutic action is thought to relate to modulation of dopamine and serotonin receptors in the brain.

**Guidelines for Use:** Abilify is available in 2, 5, 10, 15, 20, and 30 mg. tablets and in liquid form; tablets should not be broken. No generic form is available at present. The usual starting dose is 5-15 mg. once daily, which may be increased over time to control symptoms, up to a maximum of 30 mg. daily. It may be taken with or without food. It may take several weeks for the full therapeutic effects of Abilify to be seen. While extended studies using Abilify have not yet been done, it is likely to be used for long-term maintenance in severe disorders. Abilify is not thought to be habit-forming, but studies of its potential for addiction have not been done.

If you forget to take this medication but remember within a few hours, take it when you remember. Otherwise, wait until your next dose. Do not take double doses. Store the drug in a dry, tightly-closed, light-resistant container out of the reach of children.

**Side Effects of Abilify:**

*Note: Most side effects taper off during treatment as you become used to the drug.

**Common side effects** (10% or more of users experience; notify your clinician if severe):
- agitation, restlessness*
- headache
- light-headedness
- insomnia
- drowsiness
- constipation
- nausea, vomiting

**Less common side effects** (less than 10% of users experience; notify if severe):
- weakness
- tremor*
- weight gain** or loss
- blurry vision
- skin rash: STOP THE DRUG AND CALL YOUR CLINICIAN.

*Another medication may be added to reduce these side effects.

**Since significant weight gain can have implications for your general health, it is advisable to keep track of your weight and let your clinician know if it is increasing. Lab work may be ordered for some people taking Abilify to monitor blood glucose, cholesterol, and other indices related to weight gain and its complications.

Prolonged use of Abilify may be associated with slight risk of developing a side effect known as tardive dyskinesia (TD), which causes people to have uncontrollable muscle movements. These often affect the face, mouth, and tongue but can affect any part of the body. Movements may be subtle or marked. TD is sometimes reversed by stopping the
drug, but may be permanent. You should work with your clinician to ensure that you are taking the lowest effective dose of Abilify to minimize risk of TD. At the same time, it is a highly effective drug and the serious mental health conditions for which it is used often require long-term medication maintenance. You, your loved ones, and your clinician will need to assess the risk/benefit balance in taking drugs with risk of TD.

**Precautions:** Do not take this drug if you have ever had an allergic reaction to Abilify. Inform your clinician if you have any known allergies; if you have ever had seizures or been diagnosed with epilepsy, kidney disease, or liver disease; if you are taking any other drug (prescription or non-prescription), vitamin, supplement, or herb; if you are undergoing anesthesia or surgery while taking this drug; if you are a cigarette smoker. **Inform your clinician if you or might become pregnant.** Abilify may be toxic to the fetus and should only be taken by pregnant women if benefit to mother and fetus clearly outweigh risk. Women taking Abilify should not breast feed. Abilify has not been tested in children and is not recommended for use by infants or children. Metabolism of the drug may be slowed in the elderly, so lower doses may be needed. Elderly patients with dementia-related psychosis treated with atypical antipsychotics are at an increased risk of death compared to placebo; Abilify is not approved for the treatment of dementia-related psychosis.

**This drug may cause drowsiness.** If so, avoid driving or operating machinery until you are sure your alertness and coordination allow for safe operation.

Do not discontinue this drug without consulting with your clinician. Abilify should be tapered down slowly and you should be monitored for the re-emergence of symptoms.

To date, overdoses of Abilify alone have not been fatal. However, immediate emergency medical care should be sought in cases of overdose, particularly if multiple drugs and/or alcohol are suspected. Symptoms of overdosage include drowsiness and vomiting.

**Interactions:**

**Alcohol:** You should avoid alcohol while taking Abilify.

**Food/beverages:** No restrictions.

**Other drugs:** These drugs may interact with Abilify: fluoxetine (Prozac), paroxetine (Paxil), fluvoxamine (Luvox), fluphenazine (Prolixin), haloperidol (Haldol), thioridazine (Mellaril), amitriptyline, bupropion (Wellbutrin, Zyban), clomipramine (Anafranil), desipramine, diphenhydramine (Benadryl), quinidine, carbamazepine (Tegretol), fluconazole (Diflucan), ketoconazole (Nizoral), itraconazole (Sporanox), erythromycin, clarithromycin (Biaxin), and others. Discuss with your clinician. Care should be taken when Abilify is used with other medicines that lower blood pressure due to increased risk of dizziness and falling. Abilify may increase the effects of other sedating medications such as antihistamines, sedatives, narcotics, muscle relaxants, barbiturates and anesthetics.