Treatment Options

A guide to effective psychiatric medications, natural treatments and therapies
We hope this list will help you brainstorm with us and find new ways to reach full recovery. We don’t recommend using it on your own – most of these treatments will not be right for everyone and important details (like risks) are left out. Please ask us if you’d like to learn more about any of the options below, and feel free to take a copy with you.

**Bipolar & Mood Swings**

Most medications in this category are called Mood Stabilizers as they help to stabilize the cycling between depressed and manic (irritable, agitated, hyper) states of bipolar disorder. Some are only used for the depressed phase, and these may be helpful during non-bipolar depression as well. Many of these medications can help people with irritability or mood swings that are not due to bipolar disorder (such as borderline personality disorder).

**Bipolar Depression**
Lamotrigine (lamictal), quetiapine (seroquel), lithium, modafinil (provigil), armodafinil (nuvigil), pramipexole (mirapex), ropinirole (requip), olanzapine/fluoxetine combination (symbyax), luradione (latuda), cariprazine (vraylar), pioglitazone (actose), minocycline/aspirin combo, ramelteon (rozerem). Electroconvulsive therapy (ECT), transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS).

**Manic and Mixed States**
Oxcarbazepine (trileptal), carbamazepine (tegretol, equetro), valproate (depakote), lithium

Atypicals: Aripiprazole (abilify), asenapine (saphris), brexipiprazole (rexulti), cariprazine (vraylar), iloperidone (fanapt), luradione (latuda), olanzapine (zyprexa), olanzapine/fluoxetine combination (symbyax, zyprexa+prozac), paloperidone (invega), quetiapine (seroquel), risperidone (risperdal), ziprasidone (geodon).

Experimental treatments for bipolar: Nimodipine, isradipine, amlodipine, verapamil, allopurinol, levetiracetam (keppra), clozapine (clozaril), memantine (namenda), galantamine.

**Natural**
Omega-3 (fish oil), N-acetylcysteine (NAC, cerofolin), inositol, magnesium, sensoril, empower-plus vitamin, lightbox, dawn simulator, dark therapy (strict night-time darkness).

**Psychotherapies**
Interpersonal social rhythm therapy (IPSRT), bipolar psychoeducation group, family-assisted therapy. See also therapies for depression. Dialectical behavior therapy (DBT) was originally designed for borderline personality disorder but can be helpful for severe mood swings in bipolar.

**Antidepressants**
Antidepressants are helpful for non-bipolar depression and anxiety. Their use in bipolar depression is more controversial – they can rarely help (about 10% of the time) and have a greater chance of making moods worse (20-30% of the time).
SSRI Antidepressants
Fluoxetine (prozac), sertraline (zoloft), citalopram (celexa), escitalopram (lexapro), paroxetine (paxil), fluvoxamine (luvox).

Serotonergic Antidepressants
Vortioxetine (trintellix), vilazodone (vilbryd).

SNRI Antidepressants
Venlafaxine (effexor), desvenlafaxine (pristiq), duloxetine (cymbalta), milnacipran (savella), levomilnacipran (fetzima).

Other Antidepressants
Buproprion (wellbutrin, budeprion, aplezin), mirtazipine (remeron), vilazodone (vilbyrd), nefazodone (serzone), trazodone (desyrel), pramipexole (mirapex), ropinirole (requip), riluzole (rilutek), amantadine, buspirone (when used with melatonin), ketamine.

MAOI Antidepressants
Selegiline (emsam), tranylcypromine (parnate), isocarboxazid (marplan), phenelzine (nardil).

Tricyclic Antidepressants
Amitriptyline (elavil), clomipramine (anafranil), doxepin (sinequan), imipramine (tofranil), nortriptyline (pamelor), protriptyline (vivactil), trimipramine (sumontil), desipramine (norpramin). Tetracyclic versions: maprotiline, amoxapine.

Antidepressant Augmentation
These options only help depression when added to an antidepressant
Lithium, aripiprazole (abilify), quetiapine (seroquel), ziprasidone (geodon), risperidone (risperdal), olanzapine (symbyax or zyprexa/prozac), cariprazine (vraylar), rexulti (brexipiprazole), modafinil (provigil), armodafinil (nuvigil), thyroid T3 (cytomel), thyroid T4 (synthroid), statins (lovastatin, atorvastatin), topiramate (topamax), pindolol, cycloserine, minocycline.

Natural
Lightbox, SAMe, l-methylfolate (deplin, cerefolin, enlyte), omega-3, citicoline, chromium picolinate, B-vitamins, folate, rhodiola rosea, creatine, curcumin, chamomile, acetyl-l-carnitine, saffron, lavender.

Devices and Procedures
Transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS), electroconvulsive therapy (ECT), wake therapy, lightbox, dawn simulator, air ionizer (www.cet.org), ketamine infusion (experimental), vagal nerve stimulation (surgical device), alpha-stim (www.alpha-stim.com), whole body hyperthermia.

Psychotherapies
Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), mindfulness, acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT), interpersonal therapy, behavioral activation. A specific therapy is available for chronic depression called cognitive behavioral analysis system of therapy (CBASP).
Anxiety, Trauma, Phobias

Anxiety is usually a feature of another psychiatric problem, and is best addressed by treating the underlying problem. When anxiety medications are used to treat they symptom of anxiety, rather than a diagnosable anxiety disorder, things can go wrong (this is why most medications for anxiety actually list “anxiety” as a side effect).

Anxiety disorders include: Panic Disorder, Generalized Anxiety Disorder, Phobias, and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

Most of the antidepressants above are also effective in these anxiety disorders. A few other options exist for anxiety disorders:

General anxiety treatments
Most of the antidepressants above are also effective in these anxiety disorders, though antidepressants can worsen anxiety/mood if you have bipolar disorder. Non antidepressant options: buspirone (buspar), gabapentin (neurontin), pregabalin (lyrica), riluzole (rilutek). For performance anxiety: propranolol (inderal). Device: alpha-stim (www.alpha-stim.com).

Post traumatic stress (PTSD)

Treatment of PTSD: Most serotonin (SSRI, SNRI) antidepressants, mirtazapine (remeron), topiramate (topamax). See also Nightmares under Sleep (below).

Prevention of PTSD: If you’ve had a recent trauma, avoiding alcohol and benzodiazepines can help prevent PTSD. Two medications (hydrocortisone and propranolol) may also have preventative effects.

Natural
Rhodiola rosea, chamomile, probiotics, oral lavender, aromatherapy (e.g. lavender scent).

Psychotherapies
Therapy is usually more effective than medication for anxiety, particularly in the long-term. One of the paradoxes of therapy for anxiety is that anxiety is actually a normal and healthy reaction, so the goal of therapy is not to make anxiety go away completely. Rather, good therapy for anxiety helps you redirect your attitudes and actions so that you manage anxiety better and have less fearful avoidance.

Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), mindfulness, acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT), hypnotherapy, progressive muscle relaxation. Specific therapies for trauma-related anxiety include eye movement desensitization (EMDR) and CBT.

Medication to Enhance Therapy
Cycloserine is a medicine which enhances the brain’s learning abilities. It can be used along with specific therapies for anxiety to help people recover faster.
Benzodiazepines

Benzodiazepines can be taken as-needed for anxiety but it is best to take them as little as possible: anxiety has been found to worsen in the long term when they are used. Although they help reduce anxiety in the short term, they also prevent the brain from processing and learning ways to overcome anxiety. For this reason, benzodiazepines can reduce the benefits of psychotherapy for anxiety if they are taken while in therapy. Benzodiazepines can also cause addiction and memory impairment if used long-term.

*Benzodiazepines: Clonazepam (klonopin and wafers), diazepam (valium), lorazepam (ativan), oxazepam (serax), alprazolam (xanax, xanax-xl), temazepam (restoril), chlordiazepoxide (librium), clorazepate (tranxene), estazolam (prosom), flurazepam (dalmame), quazepam (dural), triazolam (halcion)*

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD)

OCD is a type of anxiety caused by repetitive, intrusive thoughts, doubts and worries. It usually causes people to engage in compulsions to find short-term relief, though these compulsions make the anxiety worse in the long term. Examples of compulsions include checking things, counting, repeating things, rituals, cleaning and sorting.

Medication

Fluvoxamine (luvox) and other SSRI antidepressants, clomipramine (anafranil), ondansetron (zofran), granisetron (sancuso), memantine (namenda), aripiprazole (abilify), olanzapine (zyprexa, symbyax), risperidone (risperdal), quetiapine (seroquel), topiramate (topamax).

Natural

N-acetylcysteine (NAC, cerefolin), omega-3 (fish oil).

Psychotherapy

Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) with exposure-response prevention (in group or individual format).

Psychosis

Psychosis means that your brain’s ability to perceive and sense reality has been altered. Common symptoms include paranoia and hearing things or seeing things that aren’t there. Psychosis can happen for many reasons, including fever and medical conditions. Psychiatric conditions that commonly cause psychosis include schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, depression, and substance abuse.

Atypical Antipsychotics

Atypicals: Aripiprazole (abilify), asenapine (saphris), brexpiprazole (rexulti), cariprazine (vraylar), iloperidone (fanapt), lurasidone (latuda), olanzapine (zyprexa), paliperidone (invega), quetiapine (seroquel), risperidone (risperdal), ziprasidone (geodon).
Typical Antipsychotics
Chlorpromazine (thorazine), chlorprothixene (truxal), thioridazine (mellaril), mesoridazine, levomepromazine, loxapine (loxitane), molindone (moban), perphenazine (trilafon), thiopixtene (navane), trifluoperazine (stelazine), haloperidol (haldol), fluphenazine (prolixin), droperidol, zuclopenthixol (clopixol), flupentixol (depixol), prochlorperazine.

Clozapine
Clozapine (clozaril) is the only antipsychotic which can work better than all the others. It should be considered if nothing else is working, but it has serious health risks associated with it so shouldn’t be your first choice.

Natural
These treatments do not help psychosis, but help brain function and depression in people who have developed psychosis: N-acetylcysteine (NAC, cerefolin), omega-3 (fish oil).

ADHD

Stimulants
Methylphenidate (ritalin, concerta, metadate, daytrana, quillivant), des-methylphenidate (focalin), amphetamine salts (adderall, evekeo, adzenys, dyanavel), dexedrine (vyvanse, zenzedì).

Non-stimulants
Atomoxetine (strattera), modafinil (nuvigil), armodafinil (provigil), guanfacine (intuniv), clonidine (kapvay), bupropion (wellbutrin, budeprion, aplenzin).

Natural
Vayarin, omega-3 (fish oil).

Psychotherapies
Coaching and skill-building therapies, including cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT).

Memory and Concentration
Concentration problems are a feature of most psychiatric disorders, and unfortunately they are often one of the last symptoms to improve. Although these concentration problems can resemble ADHD, they are not due to the same brain changes as ADHD, so treatments for ADHD usually do not work or can make the problem worse. Medications for memory are all designed to prevent dementia from getting worse, and do not work for other kinds of memory problems.

Ask us about behavioral and dietary approaches which can improve concentration. There is also a behavioral group therapy that improves concentration.
**Natural**
N-acetylcysteine (NAC, cerefolin), vayacog, vayarin, sensoril, curcumin, cocoavia, ginkgo, citicoline.

**Medications**
There are no medications for concentration but some treatments used for mood disorders have cognitive benefits: lamotrigine (lamictal), modafinil (provigil), armodafinil (nuvigil), pramipexole (mirapex), vortioxetine (trintelliX), buproprion (wellbutrin, budeprion, aplenzin), guanfacine, clonidine. Valacyclovir (valtrex) improves cognition in carries of the herpes/hsv virus.

**Sleep**

**z-Hypnotic Sleep Medicines**
Eszopiclone (lunesta), zaleplon (sonata), zolpidem (ambien, ambien-cR, edluar), short-acting zolpidem (intermezzo).

**Other Sleep Medicines**
Belsomra (suvorexant), ramelteon (rozerem), doxepin (silenor), trazodone (desyrl), gabapentin (neurontin), melatonin.

**Natural**
Melatonin, valerian, melatonin with zinc and magnesium.

**Devices**

**Psychotherapies**
Sleep hygiene, cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), mindfulness.

**For Nightmares**
Prasozin, doxazosin, tiagabine (gabirril), cyproheptadine.
*Psychotherapy:* Imagery rehearsal therapy, eye movement desensitization (EMDR).

**Eating Disorders**

**Binge Eating**
Vyvanse, topiramate (topamax), zonisamide, fluoxetine (prozac), zoloft (sertraline), luvox (fluvoxamine), duloxetine (cymbalta), imipramine, baclofen, chromium picolinate, atomoxetine (strattera), modafinil (provigil), armodafinil (nuvigil), inositol, protein supplements, moderate exercise.

**Bulimia (Binge & Purge)**
Topiramate (topamax), fluoxetine (prozac), luvox (fluvoxamine), ondansetron (zofran), buspar (buspirone), lightbox, moderate exercise.
**Anorexia**
Olanzapine (zyprexa), cyproheptadine, zinc supplement.

**Psychotherapies**
Family approaches (Maudsley), residential treatment, cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), 12-step (e.g. overeaters anonymous), nutritional counseling, mindfulness-based eating, interpersonal therapy, dialectical behavior therapy (DBT).

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**Addiction**

**Alcohol**
Acamprosate (campral), naltrexone, disulfiram (antabuse), gabapentin (neurontin), topiramate (topamax), memantadine (namenda), zonisamide, ondansetron (zofran), granisetron (sancuso), baclofen, N-acetylcysteine (NAC, cerefolin).

**Opioids**
Naltrexone (vivitrol), suboxone, clonidine.

**Cocaine**
Modafinil (provigil), armodafinil (nuvigil), topiramate (topamax), citicoline.

**Marajuanna**
Gabapentin (neurontin), topiramate (topamax), N-acetylcysteine (NAC, cerefolin).

**Nicotine**
Varenicline (chantix), nicotine replacements, bupropion (wellbutrin, budeprion, aplenzin, zyban), melatonin (low-dose), clonidine, N-acetylcysteine (NAC, cerefolin).

**Psychotherapies**
Motivational enhancement, cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), dialectical behavior therapy (DBT), contingency management, group therapy, 12-step programs, intensive-outpatient programs and therapeutic communities.
Relieving Side Effects

Usually it is best to manage side effects by reducing the dosage or changing to a more tolerable treatment. If that can’t be accomplished, there are treatments that can directly reduce side effects.

**Weight gain**
Topamax, orlistat, zonisamide, wellbutrin/naltrexone combination.
*For weight gain on atypical antipsychotics:*
Metformin, nizatidine, melatonin

**Sexual dysfunction**
Viagra, cialis, levitra, flibanserin, wellbutrin, buspirone, mirtazapine, trazodone, yohimbine, cyproheptadine, ginkgo, maca root, zesta, arginmax. Aspirin (if taking lithium).

**Hair Loss**
Biotin, selenium, zinc, minoxidil (rogaine)

**Sweating**
Terazosin, clonidine, oxybutynin, cogentin, glycopyrrolate, mirtazapine, cyproheptadine

**Itching**
Hydroxyzine, doxepin, aveeno oatmeal bath, sarna lotion

**Acne**
Doxycycline, tetracycline

**Diarrhea**
Probiotics, loperamide, metamucil, milk of magnesia, amphojetil, bismuth subsalicylate

**Constipation**
Colace, methylcellulose, psyllium seed, senna, metoclopramide, bethanechol

**Nausea**
Ginger tabs, ondansetron, promethazine

**Dry Mouth**
Sugarless gum (Spry), biotene, evoxac, pilocarpine

**Drooling**
Glycopyrrolate

**Tremor**
Propranolol, vitamin B6, primidone

**Restlessness on antipsychotics (akathisia)**
Propranolol, betaxolol, vitamin B6, pramipexole, ropinirole, trazodone, gabapentin, mirtazapine, cyproheptadine, diphenhydramine

**Muscle tension/contractions on antipsychotics (dystonia)**
Benztropine (cogentin)

**Unwanted movements on antipsychotics (tardive dyskinesia)**
Ginkgo extract (egb-761), tarvil, keppra. Prevention: vitamin E, lithium

**Teeth grinding (bruxism)**
Propranolol, buspirone, gabapentin, magnesium

**Leg cramps**
Gabapentin, vitamin E, vitamin B-complex, calcium

**Ear ringing (tinnitus)**
Melatonin