

Helpful Guides

The pros and cons of **medication for mental health**

Discover the pros and cons of medication for mental health in this informative guide, helping you make an informed decision about its potential benefits and drawbacks.



Medication for mental health can cause mixed reactions from those who take it and healthcare professionals. As with any healthcare option, medication has pros and cons.

Learning more about these factors can help you make a more informed decision when choosing to take or refuse it.

The benefits of medication

Medication for mental health can have significant benefits in reducing your symptoms and making you feel better. Although some people are reluctant to start certain medications, there are some of the major benefits for mental health, including:

Improved symptoms

The number one benefit of mental health medication is that it can drastically improve your symptoms and make daily life easier to manage.

Mental health conditions can impact every aspect of life and prevent you from doing the things you enjoy. Medication can reduce symptoms like apathy, lethargy, panic and fatigue, and control unwelcome thoughts and feelings, making doing the things you want or need easier.

Stabilised mood

Certain medications can stabilise your mood, allowing you to manage decision-making and regulate your emotions. This effect makes daily life and relationships easier and less complex.

In addition, some medications tackle a condition at the chemical source. For example, lithium is used as a mood stabiliser.

Opening up new options

Medication is often used as a starting point for accessing other forms of treatment. For example, you may benefit from counselling or different therapeutic strategies but don't have the energy or motivation to access them due to your mental health.

Medication can work very well to reduce acute symptoms and allow you to access treatment on a long-term basis.

See how the Fircroft Trust can help you in other ways...

Visit thefircrofttrust.org and see how our Specialist Services can benefit you.

t: 020 8399 1772

e: office@thefircrofttrust.org

w: thefircrofttrust.org

Areas for caution

Most medical treatments come with a few notes of caution, and medication for mental health is no different. Some people choose to refuse medication for various reasons. Whether you decide to take it or not, it's helpful to understand what issues can arise from certain treatment options.

Finding what works for you

There are many mental health medications available, and not all of them will work for everyone and every condition. Typically, you'll be prescribed one medication and will have to wait a few weeks or months to see if it helps you.

It can be hard to know how you'll react to a medication before taking it, which may make you hesitant. The key here is communication – make sure to tell your healthcare provider if a medication isn't working for you.

Side effects

Side effects are a common reason why many people choose not to take medication for their mental health. But what side effects do mental health medications cause? And how bad are they?

This query relates to the earlier point about finding the correct medication for you. Most medications, mental health or otherwise, have some side effects, although they may be mild. Common side effects include:

- Trouble sleeping
- Nausea
- Headaches
- Fatigue

Some people will have next to no side effects. Others will experience them more acutely. Therefore, weighing up your experience of the side effects against how the medication helps your mental health is the best approach to deciding whether they are helpful.

Most side effects diminish or go away within 2-3 weeks. If yours don't, or you find that they're too severe to make them worth the benefits, talk to your healthcare provider and see if you can take an alternative.

Not addressing the core problem

For some mental health conditions, medication is a way of controlling symptoms rather than resolving or curing the root issue. Many people find that medication is best used in conjunction with other forms of treatment, like counselling.

For more information on managing medication and mental health, please get in touch with us at The Fircroft Trust.