

Medications may be useful in treating symptoms of pediatric mental health conditions. In most cases medications are used along with evidence based psychosocial treatments. Discuss all medications child's treatment team (doctor, pharmacist, and therapist). Additional resources can be found at www.utahpips.org/upop.

Mood Stabilizers

Mood Stabilizers are helpful in treating bipolar disorder and risky and violent aggressive behaviors.

Most Effective Mood Stabilizers:

Lithium, Lamotrigine (Lamictal), Valproic Acid (Depakote, Depakene), Gabapentin (Neurotin), Carbamazepine (Tegretol), and Oxcarbazepine (Trileptal)

Side effects:

The side-effects of mood stabilizers vary depending on the type of medication. With some medications, side-effects are kept to a minimum through regular monitoring of the level of the drug in the blood. Some people experience no side-effects. Others may find the side-effects distressing. Side-effects usually lessen as treatment continues. Some common side effects include increased thirst and urination, nausea, weight gain and a fine trembling of the hands. Discuss the specific mood stabilizer prescribed with the doctor to understand the specific side effects.

Monitoring & Safety:

Mood stabilizers are monitored through regular blood tests and regular appointments with a doctor. It is important to get lab work done when ordered by the doctor and attend all scheduled visits to monitor blood pressure, heart rate and weight. Discuss specific side effects of medications with the prescriber and pharmacist. Notify the prescriber if your child is experiencing side effects. Mood stabilizers should not be stopped abruptly. The doctor will gradually decrease the dose until the medication is stopped. Adolescent females on Valproic Acid should also be on birth control due to risk of birth defects. Some mood stabilizers may decrease the effectiveness of oral birth control. Refer to the resource below for more specific medication information.

Resources:

https://www.aacap.org/App_Themes/AACAP/docs/resource_centers/resources/med_guides/parentsmedguide_bipolar.pdf