# 6 Top Questions to Ask Your Psychiatric Provider About Medication

Medication can be a helpful addition to mental health treatment. Psychiatric medications can be used to help reduce the side effects that accompany mental health conditions. While these medications can help manage symptoms, they should not be the only form of treatment. In this article, we will discuss helpful questions that can be asked of psychiatric providers. These questions can help patients feel empowered and supported through their psychiatry journey.

**What does this medication do, and how does it work in the brain?**

This question helps patients understand what their medication is helping them with. This question can also help empower patients by helping them understand how the medication works in their bodies.

**How long will it take to feel the effects of the medication?**

This question helps patients to understand what to look out for with their new medication. For mental health [medications](https://www.nami.org/about-mental-illness/treatments/mental-health-medications/what-to-expect-from-your-medications/), providers usually say to wait 4-6 weeks for full effects. This can be challenging for patients if their symptoms are significant. This is why therapy and medication should be combined for the best results. Patients can still be receiving benefits from therapy while their medications begin to work.

**What are the possible side effects of this medication?**

[Side effects](https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/drugs-and-treatments/medication/coping-with-side-effects/) for certain medications can be common. It’s important to discuss the most common symptoms with medication providers so that patients understand what to expect. In most cases, side effects from medication will subside with time.

**Are there any interactions I need to know about with this medication?**

Patients should ask their provider if there are any substances they need to avoid while on a specific medication. [Interactions](https://www.nami.org/about-mental-illness/treatments/mental-health-medications/what-to-avoid-with-psychiatric-medications/) between substances can be life-threatening and should be treated with caution.

**How do I know if the medication is working?**

Patients will usually be able to tell their medications are working after their symptoms begin to subside. However, if patients are not experiencing relief from their symptoms, they may need to discuss switching to a different medication. It’s important to keep [psychiatric care](https://www.camh.ca/en/health-info/mental-illness-and-addiction-index/antidepressant-medications) providers informed so they are able to choose the best medication for each patient.

**How long do I need to be on this medication?**

Every patient is unique and will require medication for varying periods of time. There is nothing wrong with taking medication for an extended time or even for the remainder of a patient’s life.

Medication for mental health can be a powerful tool to help combat symptoms. Many different types of medications can be used to treat mental health. Because of this, it’s important to find a psychiatric care provider whom patients trust and feel comfortable asking questions to. These questions will ensure that patients are matched with the best fit for their medication.

If you are interested in working with our psychiatric care team, please [let us know](https://michiganpsychologicalcare.com/contact.php).

**References**

<https://www.nami.org/about-mental-illness/treatments/mental-health-medications/what-to-expect-from-your-medications/>

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/drugs-and-treatments/medication/coping-with-side-effects/>

<https://www.nami.org/about-mental-illness/treatments/mental-health-medications/what-to-avoid-with-psychiatric-medications/>

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