



American Association of Psychiatric Pharmacists (aapp.org)

What You Need to Know About Long-Acting Injectables (LAIs)

Kayla Johnson, PharmD, BCPP, BCPP, January 2018



Reasons individuals may have trouble taking pill medications as directed²

- They forget to take the medication
- They do not think they need it
- Side effects
- The medication costs too much

Advantages of LAIs¹⁻⁴

- Improvement in taking the medication
- Regular appointments with a provider or clinician
- Steady levels of medication in the blood
- Fewer side effects from the medication

What is a Long-Acting Injectable (LAI)?

Long-acting injectables (LAIs) are injectable medications used for individuals living with mental illness.^{1, 2} LAIs are usually the same medication that is taken in pill form but when injected they allow for the slow release of medication into the blood over a longer period of time.^{1,2} LAIs include: Abilify Maintena®, Aristada®, fluphenazine decanoate, Haldol decanoate®, Invega Sustenna®, Invega Trinza®, Risperdal Consta®, Perseris®, Uzedyl® and Zyprexa Relprevv®. The LAI can last anywhere from 2-12 weeks with just one dose, which helps to control symptoms of mental illness.

What are LAIs used for?

LAIs are usually given to treat psychosis (hallucinations or delusions) in individuals living with schizophrenia.¹⁻³ Some LAIs may be used as mood stabilizers in individuals living with bipolar disorder or schizoaffective disorder.⁵

How can a LAI help?

LAIs can help individuals stay on track with a medication plan.¹⁻⁴ If someone is having trouble sticking to a plan, many things may happen. One problem could be needing to stay in a hospital until the illness is better.¹⁻⁴ Other problems may include trouble with family and friends or other relationships.

When comparing LAIs to pill medications, LAIs may lower the chances of someone going to the hospital.¹⁻³ LAIs allow for a steady level of medication in the blood.²⁻³ These steady levels help lower the chance of side effects.²⁻³ The LAIs may also help improve quality of life and satisfaction with medication.³

How are LAIs given?

LAIs are given as an injection in the muscles of the arm or bottom.^{1,4} When starting a LAI for the first time, individuals may also have to take the pill medication for a few weeks.^{1,3} The pill allows the injection to have time to start working.³

What if I am interested in a LAI?

If interested in a LAI, talk to a provider or clinician. A LAI may not be right for every person living with mental illness. The main side effect of a LAI is pain at the injection site.¹⁻³

When talking to a provider or clinician, here are some questions to ask:⁴

- How will a LAI help?
- What symptoms will a LAI control?
- What side effects may occur?
- What blood work will need to be done?

Remember!

- ✓ LAIs are medications that are made to help individuals living with mental illness.
- ✓ LAIs may help to reduce time in the hospital and increase quality of life.
- ✓ LAI injections are given every 2-12 weeks depending on which medication is best. This schedule may help individuals stick to a medication plan.
- ✓ For individuals worried about paying for a LAI, help may be available. Many insurance plans should help cover the cost of one of the LAIs. The drug company for each medication may also be able to help.



Go online to learn more and to view the references for this toolkit.

aapp.org/366991

Important Disclosure: This information is being provided as a community outreach effort of the American Association of Psychiatric Pharmacists. This information is for educational and informational purposes only and is not medical advice. This information contains a summary of important points and is not an exhaustive review of information about the topic. Always seek the advice of a physician or other qualified medical professional with any questions you may have regarding medications or medical conditions. Never delay seeking professional medical advice or disregard medical professional advice as a result of any information provided herein. The American Association of Psychiatric Pharmacists disclaims any and all liability alleged as a result of the information provided herein.