



SAMHSA'S PROGRAM TO ACHIEVE WELLNESS

Incorporating Wellness Into Recovery

The Importance of Addressing Medication Side Effects with Youth and Young Adults

SAMHSA's Program to Achieve Wellness

Children and adolescents are most at risk of gaining weight as a side effect of prescriptions.ⁱ

- Use of antipsychotics in children and adolescents has increased sharply in the past few decades
- Gaining weight impacts physical health and mental health in young people — including issues with body image and self-esteem
- The current interventions recommended for antipsychotic-induced weight gain include lifestyle management, switching medication to a drug with a lower propensity for weight gain, and pharmacologic (particularly metformin) treatment

Up to one third of children and youth (10-36%) who took antipsychotic drugs for the first time became overweight or obese in as few as 11 weeks.ⁱⁱ

TAKE ACTION

(for medical, mental health, and substance use disorder providers):

- Discuss the side effects of any medication with youth and young adults from the regimen's startⁱⁱⁱ
- Strategies like early intervention and group support, involving family or a trusted friend, and incentivizing results may be helpful when fighting weight gain in youth and young adults
- In the event the youth or young adult is already taking medications that have resulted in weight gain, consider a safe strategy for switching to a weight-neutral medication

ⁱ Sheidow, A.J., McCart, M.R. & Davis, M. (2016). Multisystemic therapy for emerging adults with serious mental illness and justice involvement. *Cognitive and Behavioral Practice*, 23, 356-367. doi: 10.1016/j.cbpra.2015.09.003.

ⁱⁱ Correll, C.U., Manu, P., Olshanskiy, V., Napolitano, B., Kane, J.M., Malhotra, A.K. (2009). Cardiometabolic risk of second-generation antipsychotic medications during first-time use in children and adolescents. *JAMA*, 302(16), 1765-1773. doi: 10.1001/jama.2009.1549

ⁱⁱⁱ Advocacy Resource Center. (2015). Issue Brief: Addressing childhood obesity. American Medical Association. <https://www.ama-assn.org/sites/default/files/media-browser/specialty%20group/arc/addressing-childhood-obesity-issue-brief.pdf>