



Physical health is important for good mental health. Improving your diet and taking regular exercise can help you to feel and look good, but also be more confident and help your immune system. This is especially important when taking antipsychotic medications (such as quetiapine, risperidone, clozapine or olanzapine). Antipsychotic medications are important to help you get better but for some people, they can also make it easier for you to put on weight.

Why do some people taking medications for psychosis gain weight?

There is no one answer, but some possible reasons are:

- The medication can change your appetite, make you feel more hungry or make it harder to recognise that you're full
- You may get a dry mouth and drink more sugary drinks
- You may exercise less because you feel less energetic
- The medications might cause cravings for fatty and sugary foods

You don't need to stop taking medications!

There are some really easy ways to reduce side-effects

What do you need to do?

- It's really important to try to eat healthily and to get regular exercise.
- Start thinking about the exercise you do and what you eat as soon as possible after starting medication. Where can you make useful changes?
- Ask for help with choosing healthy food and doing exercise - tell the people around you so they can help.
- It also helps to keep an eye on your weight and ask your case manager or doctor to measure your weight and height regularly.
- If you are worried about weight gain, talk to your clinician at OYH for support and advice –one of their roles is discuss these issues with you, and to keep an eye on any changes.

What checks should I have?

1. Blood tests to look at:

- Glucose (sugar) levels - an indicator of risk of diabetes
- Lipid (fat) levels - such as cholesterol (high 'bad' cholesterol increases the risk of heart disease and stroke)

2. Weight - putting on too much weight, a side effect of antipsychotics for some people, can increase the risk of diabetes and heart disease in the future.

3. Blood pressure - high blood pressure may also contribute to the development of heart disease in the future.

For further information about how to keep a healthy weight visit:

> www.daa.asn.au

> www.goforyourlife.vic.gov.au

Also refer to the OYH well being fact sheets

> <http://tc.oyh.org.au/InformationResources/factsheets>

