



Caregiver Bulletin



Neuroleptic malignant syndrome

Did you know...

Neuroleptic malignant syndrome, or NMS, is a serious but rare reaction that can happen with some medications. It can be life-threatening, but it is treatable. Most people who get NMS fully recover if they receive prompt treatment.

Call 911 immediately if you suspect NMS.

How do we treat NMS?

NMS requires professional medical care. Call 911 immediately if you suspect NMS.

[Neuroleptic Malignant Syndrome: Symptoms & Treatment \(clevelandclinic.org\)](https://clevelandclinic.org/health/symptoms/12345-neuroleptic-malignant-syndrome)

Who is at risk?

Anyone taking antipsychotic (neuroleptic) medication is at risk.

Doctors commonly prescribe this type of medication to treat:

- Bipolar disorder.
- Dementia.
- Depression.
- Eating disorders.
- Generalized anxiety disorder.
- Insomnia.
- Personality disorders.
- Post-traumatic stress disorder.
- Schizoaffective disorder.
- Schizophrenia and related disorders.

What should I look for?

- Fever 102°F or higher.
- Tremors.
- Irregular or fast heartbeat.
- Excessive sweating.
- Changes in mental state (agitation or paranoia).
- New onset of seizures.
- Stiff or rigid muscles.
- New incontinent episodes.
- High or low blood pressures.
- Excessive saliva (spit)

Understanding risk factors

- The first week of taking a new neuroleptic medication is the most common to see NMS.
- It can develop at any time during treatment.
- A person taking multiple neuroleptic medications can be at higher risk.
- Men are at higher risk than women.
- Maintain hydration and nutrition.
- Stopping medication too fast can increase risk.
- Only three percent of people taking antipsychotic medications develop NMS.

