What You Should Know About “Neuroleptic Malignant Syndrome”

Neuroleptic malignant syndrome is a rare but potentially life-threatening reaction to the use of almost any of a group of antipsychotic drugs or major tranquilizers (neuroleptics). These drugs are commonly prescribed for the treatment of schizophrenia and other neurological, mental, or emotional disorders.

Several of the more commonly prescribed neuroleptics include thioridazine, haloperidol, chlorpromazine, fluphenazine and perphenazine.

The noticing and treating symptoms early is important because NMS can progress quickly over 24 to 72 hours. One early symptom is high blood pressure after the start of the neuroleptic. If NMS occurs, it usually lasts from 5 to 10 days.

Some **signs that you might have NMS** are:

- High blood pressure
- Sweating
- Fever
- Change in skin color, usually pale (pallor)
- Rapid or irregular heart beat
- Changes in level of consciousness
- Difficult breathing
- Tremors
- Muscle stiffness or rigidity

Call your prescriber right away or go to the emergency room if you think you have NMS. **Do not wait if you feel really bad or if you are getting worse.** Be sure to bring all of the medicines you are taking. Or bring a complete list of them. Include vitamins and supplements. This can help your prescriber figure out if you have NMS.

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