

# Alameda County Behavioral Health Care Services

## Drug Information Sheet: **clozapine (Clozaril)**

Clozapine is an antipsychotic agent. It is used to treat confusion, voices, agitation, and fearfulness associated with schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, depression, and other conditions. In addition, clozapine can maintain the ability to think clearly.

Clozapine has different adverse effects than other antipsychotic agents. It is used in patients who have not responded to other antipsychotic agents, or have had severe side effects. Some individuals will tolerate and respond to clozapine better than the other antipsychotic agents. Some side effects can include:

### ***Common***

drowsiness  
dizziness/  
loss of balance  
rapid heart rate  
increased saliva  
constipation  
blurred vision

### ***Less Common***

nausea  
fever  
restlessness  
tremor  
weight gain  
seizures

### ***Rare***

muscle stiffness/spasm  
drop in white blood cells

Approximately 1-2% of patients receiving clozapine experience a drop in white blood cells (agranulocytosis), which could lead to serious or life threatening infections. Due to this possible side effect, a weekly blood test to monitor your white blood cells is required. A weekly supply of medication can be filled at the pharmacy only after a blood test is drawn, and the pharmacy receives a report of a normal blood count.

**Clozapine needs to be taken on a daily basis, and works gradually. It may take several weeks or months for a full effect.**