



ADHD and Medication

Medication won't be the first suggestion if you are diagnosed with ADHD, as some young people find that understanding and putting strategies in place at home and school is enough to deal with the symptoms.

However if your symptoms are quite bad and other support has not helped, your doctor will assess which, if any, medication is right for you. You would usually be started on a low dose and monitored for its effectiveness to find the correct dosage for you, as it differs for individuals. Be sure to ask your doctor any questions you have about taking the medication.

Recommended medications include methylphenidate (including Ritalin), atomoxetine, dexamfetamine and lisdexamfetamine.

Methylphenidate is a stimulant medication and may help reduce hyperactivity and improve your concentration. It comes as:

- Equasym XL
- Medikinet XL
- Matoride XL
- Xenidate XL
- Ritalin®
- Concerta XL®

(XL indicates that they are slow-release and will have a consistent effect through the day.)

Dexamfetamine is also a stimulant medication that works in a similar way to methylphenidate, by stimulating areas of the brain that play a part in controlling attention and behaviour. It is licensed for children from 3 years.

Lisdexamfetamine is a similar medication to dexamfetamine, and works in the same way. It can be used by children with ADHD over the age of six if treatment with methylphenidate hasn't helped.

Atomoxetine is a non-stimulant medication which is also long-acting and will help with attention and comes as Strattera®.

Other options for treating ADHD include psychological therapy, where you talk with a professional on a one-to-one basis about your feelings, mood and behaviour, and making changes to your lifestyle including diet and exercise – young people have found that certain foods and drinks have negative effects on their behaviour.

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