

It is very important that you tell the doctor about any of these unusual side effects:

- Uncontrolled movements
- Unusual mood changes
- Skin rash or bruising
- Persistent sore throat, high temperature, joint pain, muscle cramps
- Increased hair loss
- Heart palpitations or chest pain.

Monitoring medication

It is very important that children attend review appointments regularly (at least every six months). This will help the doctor adjust the dose and timing of the medicines and avoid any serious side effects. Blood pressure and growth are monitored regularly.

Are there alternatives to these medications?

A medication called Atomoxetine is also available for ADHD. This works in a different way to Methylphenidate or Dexamfetamine

If you would like some more information about Atomoxetine, please speak to your doctor or pharmacist.

If you require translation services or a copy of this document in other languages, audio tape, Braille or larger print, please speak to a member of CWP staff, e-mail info@cwps.nhs.uk or write to: Communications, Cheshire and Wirral Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, Upton Lea, Countess of Chester Health Park, Liverpool Road, Chester, CH2 1BQ.

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如果您需要翻譯服務或想索取這份文件的其他語文、錄音帶、凸字或大字體版本，請向我們的職員查詢。您亦可以寄電郵至 info@cwps.nhs.uk 或寄信到 Communication, Cheshire and Wirral Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, Upton Lea, Countess of Chester Health Park, Liverpool Road, Chester, CH2 1BQ.

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Feedback

We welcome any suggestions you have, please send your **comments, concerns, complaints and compliments** to: Cheshire & Wirral Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, **PALS, Complaints and Claims Team**, 1829 Building, Liverpool Road, Chester, CH2 1HJ.

For more information see www.cwps.nhs.uk

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Cheshire and Wirral Partnership **NHS**
NHS Foundation Trust

Stimulant medication for ADHD

Information for parents and carers

Care • Well-being • Partnership

Medication for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

One of the most common types of medication used to treat ADHD is known as Methylphenidate. The brand names of this drug are Ritalin, Concerta, Medikinet and Equasym. There is another stimulant that is sometimes used called Dexamfetamine

What are the benefits?

Stimulant medication improves children's ability to remain focused on a task or activity.

What do the medicines do?

Methylphenidate and Dexamfetamine are short acting - they take effect within half an hour and the effects last for about four hours.

These medications are not cures - they do not affect the underlying disorder but they do help to relieve the symptoms. Neither of them are sedatives.

The exact mechanism of action is uncertain. They are thought to temporarily normalise an imbalance of neuro-transmitters in the brain. Long acting formulations of stimulants that last from eight to 13 hours are also available (Medikinet XL[®], Equasym XL[®], Concerta XL[®] and Elvanse). Your doctor can explain more about these.

Guidance for the medications

- Do not give more than the prescribed dose.
- Store the tablets in a cool dry place, out of the reach of children.

- If you forget to give a dose, give the next dose at the normal time - do not give an extra dose.
- An adult needs to have responsibility for the medication at all times. Do not give your child a supply of medication to take to school. An adult must do this.
- It is essential to contact your family doctor or the A&E department if more than the prescribed dose is taken either accidentally or intentionally as these drugs are potentially fatal in over dosage.

What are the risks of these medications?

There is no evidence that these medications are addictive. They are used very cautiously or not at all in children with epilepsy or heart disease.

If your child experiences tics or Tourettes Syndrome, these medications can in some cases cause them to worsen but your doctor will explain the risks in more detail with you.

In many cases, it is also advisable that they are not to be used in children who are anxious or agitated as it can make these symptoms worse. However, in some cases, the medications can still be helpful - your doctor can explain this in greater detail.

ADHD medicines may interact with other medicines so it is important to tell your doctor if your child is taking any other medicines.

It is advisable to avoid using stimulants when pregnant

What are the side effects?

- Some children will experience a reduction in their appetite. You should tell your doctor if this happens and they can speak to you about this in more detail.
- Some children may become sad, withdrawn and anxious for a short period of time when they begin taking the medication. This is may be because the initial dose has been too high for those children. This usually responds to a simple dosage adjustment.
- Medication may interfere with sleep and is given early in the day to avoid this.
- Occasionally children may experience headaches, stomach aches, dizziness, blurred vision or drowsiness.
- Occasionally, the medication can cause abnormal movements or tics. These usually, but not always, go away if the medication is stopped.
- They may raise blood pressure a little and this will be monitored. They very rarely cause the heart to beat irregularly (cardiac arrhythmia).
- The slowing down of growth is a rare side effect of long term use. Growth is monitored carefully to avoid this.