

Methylphenidate (Ritalin) 10 mg (short- acting)

Instructions for taking Methylphenidate

Please start with half tablet in the morning (eg with breakfast) , and then see how you feel. If nothing much happens, it is likely that you will need a higher dose to get the benefit from the medication and should therefore increased as recommended below.

The final dose that suits you is a balance between the good effects (eg feeling calm, improved concentration and organisation) and side-effects.

Generally the idea is :

- 1) keep gradually increasing the number of tablets, for each dose, until the dose is 'too strong'(i.e side-effects or reduction in effect (worsening of ADHD symptoms, such as irritability, hyperfocusing, flattened mood/'spacey').
- 2) Then you take the dose before the one that was 'too strong' dose- this is your Goldilocks Dose which you will now take every time you wish to take a dose (two or three times a day , depending on how it affects your sleep).

Do not go to more than 2 tablets (per dose) without a medical review.

Common side effects occur in 80% of patients taking this medication for the first time : such as losing your appetite, trouble getting off to sleep, dry mouth, nausea or headaches.

These side effects usually appear in the first few days and then settle but, if they don't, you will probably have to reduce the dose to a level where you are still getting good effects from the medication but without unpleasant side effects.

It appears that these medications are relatively safe but as stimulants are Schedule 8 category (government controlled) medications, specialists are bound by strict Department of Health regulations regarding scripts and prescribing.

Rarely, suicidal thoughts and psychosis (hallucinations or paranoid thoughts) can develop - usually when taken in high doses or mixed with illicit drugs and alcohol.

In this case, the stimulants should be ceased immediately and doctor's advice sought as soon as possible.

Medical Health Risks:

In patients with existing heart disease(or family history of early heart disease) , there is a risk of sudden death and abnormal heart rhythm when stimulant medication is used. That is why we have screened you already regarding your cardiac history. If you have become aware of new information regarding your heart health, stop your medication and let your doctor know as soon as possible.

If you have become aware of new information regarding glaucoma or have an increased risk, stop your medication and let your doctor know as soon as possible.

Pregnancy and Breast-Feeding: The medications used to treat ADHD – including Dexamfetamine, Vyvanse, and Ritalin, Concerta – are best considered unsafe during pregnancy, leading to low birth weight, premature birth and possibly heart defects. The safest advise is to stop using these medications BEFORE falling pregnant. These medications may also be transferred through breast milk after birth, and so the advice is to discourage breastfeeding while on this medication.

Initiating and Up-Titrating : *Suggested Regime*

In general :

- take medication doses at least 3 hours apart

Example of timing :

Breakfast (B) : 9am

Lunch(L) : 12pm

Afternoon Tea : 3pm (Optional , take only if sleep is not affected/is improved)- take the same dose as the Lunch dose.

This is an example of how you may progress increasing your dose.

At anytime you reach your 'too strong' dose, then take the lesser dose(your Goldilocks Dose) as regularly as you can, i.e you needn't continue with the rest of the progression.

WEEK 1

Day

- 1 : B- Half tablet
- 2 : B- Half tablet,
- 3 : B- Half tablet
- 4 : B- ONE tablet, L: ONE tablet
- 5: B- ONE tablet, L: ONE tablet
- 6 : B- ONE tablet, L: ONE tablet
- 7 : B- ONE tablet, L: ONE tablet

WEEK 2

- 1: B- ONE + HALF tablets, L: ONE + Half tablets
- 2: B- ONE + HALF tablets, L: ONE + Half tablets
- 3: B- TWO tablets, L: TWO tablets
- 4: B- TWO tablets, L: TWO tablets
- 5: B- TWO tablets, L: TWO tablets...

... If TWO tablets per time is the best dose, continue on this dose (either two or three times a day) until your medical review.

If side effects occur, either cease altogether or take at lesser dose.

In case of emergency, cease medication and present to local GP or hospital.