

ADHD Medication and Follow-up

After a child is diagnosed with ADHD, they may be prescribed medicine to help with symptoms. Not every child with ADHD needs medication, but these medications can help improve your child's focus, decrease distractions and lessen hyperactivity.

Medication is one part of treatment for ADHD. Other therapies that may be recommended include behavioral therapy, which helps kids to manage impulsivity and organizational skills. Most kids do best with a combination of medication and behavioral therapy, since medications allow a child to more easily learn and implement positive behavioral and emotional skills into their lives.

ADHD medication works by increasing chemicals in our brains called neurotransmitters. Most medications work by increasing the amount of dopamine and norepinephrine, which affect focus and concentration.

There are many different medications that are used to treat ADHD, but the most common group are stimulant medications. These are medications which are taken every day and start acting about 30-60 minutes after a child takes them. There are both short and long acting forms of these medications. Long acting forms stay in the body for 8-12 hours, depending on the type, which helps not only during the school day but also for homework and afterschool activities. With stimulants, once a medication has worn off for the day, the effects of that medication immediately diminish. Yesterday's ADHD medication is not present in your child's body today.

70-90% of children will benefit from stimulant medication. Although medication may increase compliance by helping a child think before acting or by increasing their ability to pay attention, medications generally do not alter a child's basic temperament, personality or motivation.

There are also non-stimulant medications that can be used to treat ADHD. These can take several weeks to notice benefits and need to be taken every day.

The most common side effects of stimulant medications are loss of appetite and trouble sleeping. Other side effects include moodiness, stomachache, headache, motor tics, and jitteriness. Generally, side effects are more common when starting a new medication or increasing the dose.

Getting the dose right for your child is crucial, and often the first 6-12 months of treatment require more frequent phone calls and follow-up visits. When your child is on too low of a dose, they may have few side effects but ADHD symptoms are poorly controlled. When they are on too high of a dose, the ADHD symptoms are well controlled, but side effects may be greater and the dose will need to be lowered.

The FDA and DEA are government agencies that regulate controlled substance prescription practices. We are required to follow their regulations and your health plan standards for refills and follow-up visits.

When starting a new medication for ADHD, your child will need to be seen in clinic for a follow-up visit 3-4 weeks after starting the medication. The interval of future visits will be determined by your child's doctor. We absolutely cannot refill prescriptions unless the patient has had an ADHD medication check in the last 6 months.

(over)



(952) 278-7000

ADHD Prescription Refill Instructions

Because stimulants are controlled substances, we are not able to include refills on prescriptions. Our patient portal is the easiest and most efficient way to refill your child's medications. Instructions can be found at the top of the portal home screen. Please allow 5-7 business days for your request to be processed. If you have questions about your child's medication or ADHD management, you can send a message to our pediatric nurses through the portal or call our office.

If you are not signed up for the patient portal, please go to our website (southdalepeds.com), click on "**I Want To...**" near the top of the page, select "**Sign up for the Portal**" from the drop-down menu, and follow the instructions.