

Prescription Stimulants

What are prescription stimulants?

- Prescription stimulants include medications such as methylphenidate (Ritalin and Concerta) and amphetamines (Dexedrine and Adderall).
- Prescription stimulants can increase alertness, attention, energy, blood pressure, heart rate, and breathing rate.
- When taken as prescribed by a doctor, prescription stimulants can safely and effectively treat disorders such as Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and narcolepsy (a sleep related condition).
- Prescription stimulants are normally taken in pill form, but they can also be snorted, smoked, or injected by people who misuse them.

Misusing prescription stimulants

- Prescription stimulants are misused when taken in doses and/or in ways other than prescribed, or by being used by someone for whom they were not prescribed.
- Many people wrongly believe that misuse of prescription stimulants to get high is a “safer” alternative to other drugs.
- Some students misuse prescription stimulants seeking to increase their wakefulness or attention. However, research suggests that the misuse of prescription stimulants is associated with poor academic performance.

Using prescription stimulants with other substances

- When taking a stimulant prescription avoid:
 - Alcohol - increases risk of alcohol overdose, may cause irregular heart rate and increase blood pressure
 - Excessive caffeine - increases risk of overdose
 - Antidepressants - enhance the effects of stimulants
 - Decongestants - may cause irregular heart rhythms

Tips for quitting

Questions to think about

- Am I using the medicine the way the doctor prescribed?
- Am I running out of pills before it can be refilled?
- Am I sharing pills with anyone in my family?
- Am I only taking my own medications?

Know your options.

- *Treatment.* Treatment for prescription stimulant addiction can be inpatient or outpatient, with outpatient being more common. Treatment is based on therapies proven effective for treating cocaine or methamphetamine addiction.
- *Behavioral Therapy.* Teaches patients to recognize risky situations, avoid use, and cope more effectively with problems.
- *Contingency Management.* Allows patients to earn rewards that promote healthy living if patients attend treatment and stay off prescription stimulants.
- *Social Support.* Letting friends or family know you are working towards quitting prescription stimulants will help your recovery process. Recovery support groups can also be effective when combined with behavioral therapy.

Risks of prescription stimulant misuse

Short Term

- Overdose, which means taking more of a prescription stimulant than your body can handle. Symptoms of an overdose include dangerously high body temperature, irregular heart beat, seizures, heart failure, and death.

Long Term

- Heart problems, psychosis, anger, and paranoia.
- Tolerance, which means needing more prescription stimulants to get the same feeling, and this can cause many negative effects (see other side).
- Addiction, which is a brain disease that is manifested by compulsive substance use despite harmful consequences.
- Withdrawal, which means the symptoms you have when you stop using, including tiredness, depression, sleep problems, inability to experience pleasure, suicidal thoughts, anxiety, irritability, and intense drug cravings.

Prescription stimulants and pregnancy

- The evidence for stimulant use while pregnant is mixed. Always inform your doctor if you are pregnant or breastfeeding.

Do not borrow or share prescription stimulants!

- Taking prescription stimulants that are not prescribed to you can cause or worsen existing health problems.
- Pills may look the same but could be different medicines, or have different amounts of medicine.
- Adult doses and child doses are not equal and are dangerous to share.

You should not take prescription stimulants if you have:

- **A heart condition!!!** ❤️
- Glaucoma
- Severe anxiety, tension, agitation, or nervousness
- Tics (body movements you cannot control)
- Tourette's syndrome (or someone in your family has it)
- A history of psychosis

Helpful links

<https://www.addictioncenter.com/stimulants/http://www.drugfreeworld.org/drugfacts/prescription/stimulants.html>

Prescription Stimulants

Effects on the Body

Psychosis, hallucinations, headaches, seizures, stroke

Irritability, nervousness, paranoia, aggression, impulsiveness, panic, restlessness, sleeplessness

Dry mouth, bad taste in mouth

Blood pressure changes, heart attack, heart failure

Respiratory issues

Tremors, loss of coordination, increased body temperature

Digestion issues, nausea, loss of appetite, weight loss, diarrhea

During pregnancy: Stimulants have not been proven to be harmful or safe for pregnant women.



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ATTC

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