

ADHD Medication and Shared Care Process

In accordance with NICE guidelines, ADHD medication is only indicated when symptoms cause significant functional impairment or if behavioural interventions prove ineffective. Medication is not a 'cure' but it can help to reduce the impact of symptoms and make daily life more manageable.

Medication types

There are two main 'groups' of ADHD medications: stimulants and non-stimulants.

- Stimulant medications include Methylphenidate, Lisdexamfetamine, and Dexamfetamine
- Atomoxetine is a non-stimulant medication



First medical appointment

If we feel that medication may be suitable for you, we will refer you to the medical team and offer you an initial appointment within 6 months.

What you can expect during your first appointment:

- You will meet with a psychiatrist, clinical nurse specialist, or prescribing pharmacist
- Appointments can last anywhere between 1 and 2 hours (they are typically 2 hours if you have been diagnosed elsewhere and are not known to our service)
- Your clinician will explore your treatment goals with you and the impact of symptoms. They will also conduct a thorough assessment of your **mental health, physical health, substance use, and driving safety**, to ensure that medication can be safely prescribed. *Contraindications may include harmful misuse of alcohol or drugs, unstable mental health, or physical health complications. If these are an issue for you then we will signpost you to the relevant services for support and offer you a medical appointment after they have been resolved. Further details can be found in a separate support guide.*
- If medication is suitable based on your history, physical health tests are likely to be requested before you begin treatment. In some cases, an ECG may be required
- We will await test results from your GP before offering you a follow-up appointment
- If it is safe to prescribe, you will be invited to an appointment to explore your medication options

Titration

Whilst you are trialling ADHD medication, you will be booked in for regular titration appointments. These are designed for you to check in with your clinician about your progress with medication and discuss any side effects or concerns you may have.

The dosage of your medication may be increased or decreased, depending on how you respond.

Shared care

Once you are stabilised on medication, you will be discharged from the ADHD service to the care of your GP. This process is known as a **Shared Care Agreement (SCA)**. Your GP will continue to prescribe your medication and monitor your physical health for the duration of your treatment.

Annual reviews

After 12-18 months, you may be invited back to the ADHD clinic for a comprehensive review of your medication by a specialist. In some cases, we may ask your GP to complete this process instead. You will be informed if this applies to you in your last titration appointment.



FAQs

What if I run out of medication?

If you run out of medication and your GP is your prescriber, then discuss this with them.

If the ADHD clinic is responsible for your prescriptions (which is typically the case during the titration period), then you should contact us to request additional supply.

Titration appointments are usually arranged to make sure you do not run out of medication (unless there are extenuating circumstances).

ADHD medications are controlled drugs (except Atomoxetine). Patients are responsible for looking after these medications. This clinic cannot replace lost prescriptions or medications. Stimulants for ADHD are 'Class B' drugs if misused.

What if I experience side effects?

You can talk with your clinician at your First Prescribing Appointment, about potential side effects. If you experience serious or intolerable side effects to your **physical health**, the ADHD medication can be stopped pending review in our clinic. You should seek medical help and advice as appropriate, by contacting your GP or NHS 111.

Call 999 if the side effects are an emergency.

If you develop worsening problems in your general **mental health** outside of ADHD, you should discuss this with your GP and who can refer you to the Common Point of Entry Service as usual.

Call Common Point of Entry (CPE) [0300 365 2000](tel:03003652000)

What happens if I want to stop my ADHD medication?

If you decide to stop the medication, you may do so without needing to gradually reduce the dose. You must inform your prescriber (GP or ADHD clinician) that you have stopped the medication. You must hand in all left-over medication supply to your local pharmacy.

Guanfacine / Intuniv must not be stopped suddenly; you must seek medical advice first.

What if I move out of area?

Let us know as soon as possible if you are planning to move out of area, so we can provide a handover of care to your new GP practice.

If you have **not started the titration process**, then your new GP should refer you to your local ADHD Service at your new area. You will, therefore, be discharged from our service. We are happy to forward any assessments and clinic letters to your new GP or your new ADHD Clinic. The new ADHD service may add you to their medical waiting list and may not offer priority service.

If you have **started titration**, we will complete this before handing over prescribing and monitoring to your new GP. You would be required to travel to our clinic from your new address. Once titration is complete, we will discharge you from our service, and your new GP an ADHD service will help you with further reviews/questions.

