



Methylphenidate (say: me-thile-fenny-date)

What is methylphenidate used for?

- Methylphenidate is mainly used to help treat ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder), and narcolepsy
- It is made as plain tablets and long-acting capsules. These are called Ritalin[®], Concerta[®], and Ritalin LA[®].

What is the usual dose?

- The usual dose of methylphenidate is around 30-40mg a day (depending on your weight)
- It can often be higher in adults e.g. up to 70mg a day or more.

How and when should I take it?

- Swallow the tablets or capsules with at least half a glass of water whilst sitting or standing
- This is to make sure that they reach the stomach and do not stick in your throat.

Plain tablets:

- Take them at regular times each day
- Don't take the last dose later than about 4pm

Concerta XL[®]

- Usually before, with or after breakfast

Ritalin XL[®]

- Usually the morning, with or after breakfast
- You can open the capsules and sprinkle the contents on food and eat, but don't chew the granules.

How long will it be before it works?

- It usually starts to work within a few hours
- The effect may then build over the next few weeks.

How long will I need to keep taking it for?

- Probably for several years but it should be reviewed at least once a year by your specialist.

Can I stop taking it suddenly?

- It is unwise to stop taking it suddenly, even if your symptoms have improved
- At smaller doses, it can probably be stopped suddenly
- At higher doses, it is possible that 'withdrawal' effects might be seen.

What should I do if I forget to take a dose of methylphenidate at the right time?

- Take the missed dose as soon as you remember within about 2-3 hours of when the dose was due
- If you remember after this take the next dose as normal
- Do not try to catch up by taking two doses at once as you may get more side-effects

Can I drink alcohol while I am taking it?

- It is not thought that alcohol will make the side effects of methylphenidate worse.

Can I drive, cycle or operate a boat while I am taking methylphenidate?

- You may feel a bit dizzy at first when taking methylphenidate
- Until you know how it affects you, be careful about driving or operating machines.

Methylphenidate can help you concentrate and so you may be less likely to have an accident but **only** if you take it regularly

What sort of side-effects might I get if I am taking methylphenidate?

Many people get:

- Headache.

Some people also get:

- Feeling hungry, losing weight
- Feeling and/or being sick
- Feeling nervous, faster heart rate
- Cough, sore nose and throat
- Feeling dizzy
- Not being able to sleep.

See your doctor if you get:

- Unexpected feelings of being angry, irritable or of wanting to harm yourself.

You **must** also see the Consumer Medicine Information leaflet that comes with the medicine for the full list of side effects but do not be too worried by this. Some people get no side effects at all. If you think you have a problem with side effects, ask your doctor, case manager or pharmacist.

Lifeline provides 24hr telephone crisis support on 13 11 14 or visit www.lifeline.org.au for information & downloads

The small print: This short leaflet is to help you understand more about your medicine. You **must** also read the manufacturer's Consumer Medicine Information (CMI) Leaflet. Do not share medicines with anyone else.

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