

# ADHD extras

## Medication guide

There are four main types of medicine licensed to treat ADHD in the UK.

1. Methylphenidate-based - Concerta XL, Equasym XL, Medikinet, Medikinet XL and Ritalin. Methylphenidate is also available without a brand name, ie called methylphenidate.
2. Dexamfetamine-based. This is available as generic dexamfetamine, or as Elvanse (slow-acting), which contains lisdexamfetamine.

*Methylphenidate and dexamfetamine are often grouped together under the name 'stimulant medicines' these have been used to treat ADHD for over 30 years. The ADHD brain processes dopamine (neurotransmitter) too quickly. Stimulants work by giving dopamine more time to act on the cells.*

3. Atomoxetine-based. Strattera is the only type available in UK at present. it increases the amount of neurotransmitter: noradrenaline. This aids concentration and helps impulse control. (This lasts in the system 24hrs/ day)
4. Guanfacine. This acts on the brain to improve attention. It may be offered to children over the age of 5 if not able to use methylphenidate or lisdexamfetamine. (lasts 1 day).

*Guanfacine should not be offered to adults with ADHD.*

When people first start on meds they will start on a low dose. This is increased as symptoms improve, until significant side effects appear. The dose is then reduced to a lower more manageable dose (this is called titration). This process is supervised by the psychiatrist and then usually handed over to the GP for repeat prescriptions (shared care).

ADHD meds are fast to work (around 30min) and mostly out of the system within 12hrs (except Atomoxetine). Usually people will start on stimulant based meds and only move on to try other types if side-effects aren't tolerated.

Medication is considered the most effective treatment for ADHD symptoms and is often life changing. However, some people can't tolerate them or prefer to avoid medication.

All medications come with side effects. Common side-effects for ADHD meds are:

- Loss of appetite- ensure good meals first/ last thing
- Difficulty falling asleep- (meds may help this if overactive mind)
- Stomach ache/ headache- may resolve
- Tics- caffeine is common trigger
- Emotional problems: zoning out/ tearful/ irritable
- Rebound of symptoms as meds wear off
- Anxiety/ depression (this usually improves on meds)
- Rapid pulse (may require ECG)

NB As professional organisers remember that we are not qualified to advise on medication. However, the client may appreciate a reminder at the beginning of a session as to whether they have taken meds/ eaten- always check if they'd like this.

## Further reading

There are a lot of useful links and resources on the [Free Your Space ADHD resources](#) page. The links below provide further education.

If you are interested in learning more and going deeper in your understanding of clients I'd strongly recommend joining the [Institute for Challenging Disorganisation](#) to access their online webinars.

Their mission: "...to provide education, research and strategies to benefit people affected by chronic disorganization, and the professionals who work with them."

[Understanding ADHD](#) is a one month online course by Future Learn (around 2 hrs study/ week. Covers ADHD symptoms, latest research & ADHD treatment. Free- but pay for ongoing access to materials.

[More Attention Less Deficit](#): This is a solidly written book by a well known US Psychologist Ari Tuckman. He mentions the benefits of Professional Organisers throughout.

[Delivered from Distraction](#): This book is by US Dr Ned Hallowell (has ADHD) It's a an update on his classic 'Driven to Distraction'.

[ADD-friendly ways to organise your life](#) is a classic- by PO Judith Kolberg & Kathleen Nadeau

[New Order](#) by Fay Wolf is a great (slightly swearsy!) book for creatives which is an easy read and v ADHD-friendly. Great to recommend to clients

[ADDIS \(UK\)](#) –charity with a wide range of resources for helping families with ADHD.

[Additude](#) is an e-zine with really practical information.

### **Neurodiversity:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aWxmEv7fOFY>

<http://www.maddchester.com/?p=405>

<https://www.adhdfoundation.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/ADHD-and-Comorbid-Conditions.pdf>

This is a great video on the [ADHD experience for girls](#).

This analogy about [trying to carry marbles](#) really gives us a feel for what people with ADHD experience.

The [VIA strengths finder](#) might be a useful tool to use with clients to help identify their strengths and use them during your work.

There are also more articles posted on the [ADHD for Organisers Facebook page](#) – this page is open to anyone who has completed training. As well as articles, please feel free to post your professional organising triumphs and challenges so that we can all learn from each other!