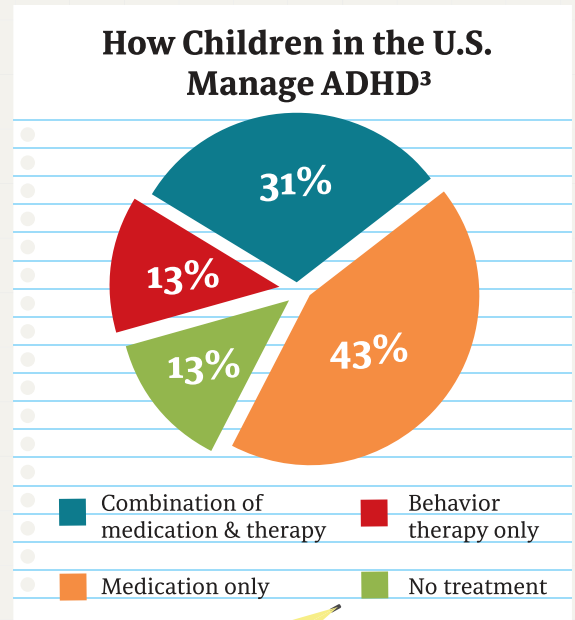


UNDERSTANDING ADHD MEDICATIONS

The decision to try medication is a difficult one. And finding the correct regimen can be just as hard. Here's an overview of ADHD medication options along with the signs and symptoms that it may be time to change your dosage—or the medication itself.

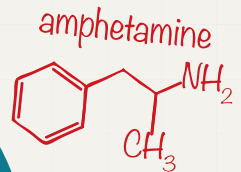
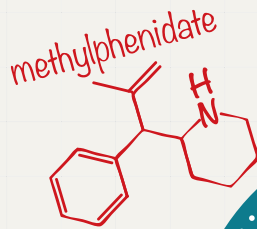


Stimulants:
the first line of defense¹

The stimulant class of medication works for **70-80%** of children with ADHD.²

Stimulants increase neurotransmitter levels of dopamine and norepinephrine between the brain's synapses. The result: reduced hyperactivity, distractibility, and/or impulsivity.

There are 29 FDA-approved stimulant medications. All of them use one of only two molecules: methylphenidate or amphetamine.



Some patients experience good results with methylphenidate; others prefer amphetamine. The best choice hinges on an individual's biochemistry; even family members can have different preferences.

SOURCES:

¹American Academy of Pediatrics, 2011, ADHD: Clinical Practice Guidelines for the Diagnosis, Evaluation, and Treatment of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder in Children and Adolescents.

²Centers for Disease Control, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (cdc.gov/ncbddd/adhd/index.html).

³2009-10 National Survey of Children with Special Health Care Needs.

How Long Will the Medication Last?



Many ADHD medications carry an XR or ER suffix, which signifies an extended-release formulation designed to gradually release medicine into the bloodstream over 10-24 hours. Others specify a duration of 3-4, 6-8, or 8-10 hours, meaning a second daily dose may be needed. The only way to determine an individual's optimal formulation and dosing schedule is through careful experimentation, observation, and tracking.

Nonstimulants:
what to try next

Atomoxetine, clonidine, and guanfacine are all FDA-approved nonstimulants that lower distractibility, impulsivity, and hyperactivity in some children with ADHD.

Find the Right Dosage

Dosage is not based on gender, age, or severity of impairment but on the rate at which the medication is metabolized and how efficiently it is absorbed by the body. Start at the lowest dosage and slowly increase it until the benefits are optimized without side effects.

3 Signs Your Dosage or Medication Needs Adjustment

- 1 Little improvement in ADHD symptoms or diminishing symptom control over time
- 2 Feeling "revved up" or "slowed down"
- 3 Experiencing side effects

Problematic Side Effects



Sleeplessness, headaches, mood swings, irritability, nausea, loss of appetite

Signs Your Medication Is Working



Sustained focus, improved mood, greater attention to details, better memory, better sleep, reduced impulsivity