

## Methylphenidate (pronounced me-thile-fenny-date)



### What is methylphenidate?

Methylphenidate is used to help treat the symptoms of ADHD, and sometimes narcolepsy. The long-acting tablets and capsules (Concerta XL<sup>®</sup>, Medikinet XL<sup>®</sup> and Equasym XL<sup>®</sup>) only have to be taken once a day, in the morning. The plain tablets (Ritalin<sup>®</sup>, Medikinet<sup>®</sup> and Equasym<sup>®</sup>) have to be taken two or three times a day.

By the way, XL stands for eXtra Long. This just means that the capsules or tablets last a long time so you only need to take one a day. Don't panic, it doesn't mean they are eXtra Large!

### What is ADHD?

ADHD stands for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. ADHD can cause you to be restless, easily distracted, not finish things, get into trouble, do things without thinking first, and not do well at school.

Methylphenidate helps boost the part of the brain that should be helping you to concentrate. This helps you concentrate better, so you can work better at school, not get into trouble as much and even sleep better.



### How and when should I take methylphenidate?

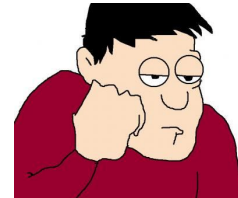
Swallow your dose with at least half a glass of water whilst sitting or standing to make sure that they reach the stomach and don't stick in your throat.

Plain tablets: take your doses at regular times each day, with the last dose is no later than teatime.

Concerta XL<sup>®</sup> should be taken at breakfast time.

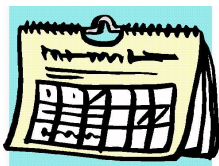
Medikinet XL<sup>®</sup> should be taken in the morning, with or after breakfast.

Equasym XL<sup>®</sup> should be taken in the morning **before** breakfast.



### How long will I have to wait before it works?

It usually starts to work within an hour or so of a dose. The full effect comes from keeping taking it every day.

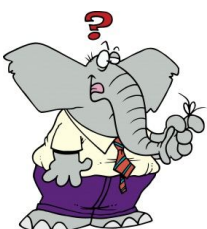


### How long will I need to keep taking methylphenidate for?

Probably for several years. Some people keep on taking it even when they have become adults.

### Can I stop taking methylphenidate suddenly?

You can stop taking low doses of methylphenidate in an emergency but you might get some withdrawal effects. So, it is better not to do this without talking it over first with other people e.g. relatives or your doctor, nurse or pharmacist. Things normally work out much better if you stop medication in a planned way.



### What should I do if I forget to take a dose of methylphenidate?

Take it as soon as you remember **BUT** if you are taking the long-acting (XL) tablets or capsules, don't take a dose any later than about late morning. If you do, it will mean that it may be much more difficult to get to sleep. Do not try to catch up by taking two or more doses at once as you may get more side-effects.









## Can I cycle or drive while I am taking methylphenidate?

You may feel a bit light-headed at first when taking methylphenidate. Until this wears off, or you know how methylphenidate affects you, be careful cycling and, if you are old enough, do not drive or operate machinery.



## What sort of side-effects might I get with methylphenidate?

The table below will show you some of the main side effects you might get from methylphenidate, and what you can do about them.

	<p><b>Not being able to get to sleep at night</b> This can be a problem. Let your doctor know. He or she may be able to change your dose. Make sure you take your dose early in the day. If you have the plain tablets, don't have a dose any later than teatime.</p>		<p><b>Feeling more anxious or nervous</b> This usually only lasts for a few weeks while you get used to the methylphenidate. If not, tell your doctor next time you meet.</p>
	<p><b>Not feeling hungry</b> You will usually get your appetite back in a few weeks. If not, let your doctor know next time you meet.</p>		<p><b>Cough, sore nose and throat</b> This should wear off but see your doctor if it does not.</p>
	<p><b>Feeling sick or being sick, or stomach pain</b> This usually wears off in a few weeks. If not, let your doctor know. Taking it after food may help.</p>		<p><b>Feeling angry, irritable or low</b> If this occurs, discuss with your doctor as soon as possible.</p>
	<p><b>Headache</b> If your head is painful, paracetamol usually helps.</p>		<p><b>Feeling dizzy, light-headed or faint</b> Do not stand up too quickly. Try and lie down when you feel it coming on. Do not cycle or drive.</p>

Do not be worried by this list of side effects. Some people get no side effects at all and others may get some effects that are not listed in this table. If you think you might have a side effect to your medicine, you should ask your doctor, nurse or pharmacist. If you want to know more, go to our website for links to other websites with more information.

**The small print:** This leaflet is to help you understand about your medicine. You should also read the manufacturer's Patient Information Leaflet (PIL). You may find lots more on the internet but beware as internet-based information is not always accurate. Do not share medicines with anyone else. Go to our website for fuller answers to these and many other questions e.g. driving, women's health, how it works, doses and interactions, and about the conditions. The "Handy charts" will help you compare the main medicines for each condition, how they work and their side effects.