

National Supply Shortage of Medicines for ADHD.

Information and advice for people currently prescribed Medication for ADHD

What is the problem?

The Government have information us that there is a national supply shortage of the medication prescribed to help manage your ADHD symptoms.

We know how important your medicines are and understand that this may cause you to feel anxious. We hope that this information will provide some reassurance and give you advice about what to do and who to contact if you need any support.

How long will the shortage last?

Based on current information, disruptions to supply are expected to last between October and December 2023 (dates vary for different medicines).

This is a national supply problem and all UK ADHD services; Paediatrics, CAMHS, Adults, and all pharmacies and dispensing GP surgeries will be affected.

The medicines affected are:

- Atomoxetine (capsules)
- Lisdexamfetamine capsules
- Methylphenidate prolonged-release capsules and tablets, and
- Guanfacine prolonged-release tablets.

If your medication is methylphenidate or lisdexamfetamine, you may want to consider just taking this on school/ education or workdays to help prolong the supply you have. Be aware of how this could affect other activities you do, such as driving.

(Do not do this if you take guanfacine. This needs to be taken every day. If you do miss one dose, start taking your prescribed dose again the next day. If you miss more than 2 doses in a row- contact your prescriber immediately for advice).

Are there alternative medications available?

Other ADHD products remain available, but they may not be suitable for everyone and may not be able to meet the increases in demand.

Your prescriber (GP or specialist), specialist team or pharmacist are always happy to talk to you about your medicines, explain why getting your medicine may be difficult at the moment and support you with solutions to issues and concerns you might have concerning this.

Where your current medication isn't available, your prescriber will discuss alternative treatment options with you and support you to make a choice that is best for you.

This could mean changing your medication to one not currently affected by the supply shortage or taking a treatment break.

If your treatment needs to be changed, after the supply shortage has resolved your medication will be reviewed and either changed back to the medicine you were previously prescribed, or a decision made to continue with the new medication if this is what you prefer.

The change in medication may mean you are taking medication more often through the day, or that they are tablets instead of capsules.

If you are not sure how to take your new medication, or have any questions about it, you can always ask your pharmacist when you collect your prescription, or speak to your prescriber. Never be worried about asking questions!

Please be aware that there may still be delays in obtaining your prescribed medication at a pharmacy. Make sure you order repeat prescriptions for your medication in good time. This means that if there are any problems getting hold of the medication – there is time to sort them out.

If you are concerned that you are not able to re-order your prescription soon enough (for example, unavailable option via NHS App or GP system) then speak to your GP surgery prescribing team for help and advice.

What should I do if I cannot get my ADHD prescription from the pharmacy?

If one pharmacy is unable to get your medicine, please try a different pharmacy. (Pharmacies may use different suppliers or wholesalers to order medicines which is why availability can vary).

If your GP prescribes your medicine, prescriptions can usually be transferred electronically between pharmacies if needed. If your prescription is provided by a specialist (from the hospital) the prescription will be returned to you so you can take it to a different pharmacy. In some cases, a new prescription might be needed, the pharmacy will advise you about this).

Where there is a known shortage of a medicine, supply levels can change quickly. This is why pharmacies in one area may be able to find a medicine and others may not.

You may decide to leave your prescription (FP10) with one pharmacy that could check wholesaler stock levels daily and place an order. It would be a good idea to leave a contact telephone number with the pharmacy and ask them to call or message in case they need to talk to about your order.

If your medication is not available, ask your pharmacist what alternative medicines they are able to order (names and strength of medication- ask them to write them down if needed). This information will be helpful to your prescriber (GP or specialist) if they need to consider other treatment options with you.

Is it safe to stop taking ADHD medication abruptly?

Please let your prescriber (GP or specialist) know as soon as possible if you think you are going to run out of medication so that they can offer appropriate advice and support.

National guidelines recommend having regular treatment breaks from ADHD medications. It is not unusual to stop taking medication over the weekend or during school holidays (and you may wish to consider this if possible, to prolong your current supply of medication*). Therefore, no harm should come from stopping medication suddenly, but ideally this should be done in a planned way. You should always let your prescriber (GP or specialist) know if you stop your medication for whatever reason.

***An exception to this** is If you are prescribed **Guanfacine (Intuniv®)** Please contact your specialist service as soon as possible if you think you are going to run out and can't get a prescription from your pharmacy. **This medication must be stopped slowly** as it can cause your blood pressure to increase if stopped suddenly.

Think about what additional support would be helpful?

If you end up missing doses of medication or need to take a treatment break it will be important to let people that support you know (for example family, friends, teachers at school and college or work colleagues).

Whilst medication can make a big difference, remember to think about all the other things you can do that make a positive difference to how you feel (including what you eat, exercise and sleep) ask for advice, information and help about this if you need it.

Further information about medication can be found [here](#) or by contacting your Specialist ADHD service.