

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

What is methylphenidate used for?

- Methylphenidate (also called Ritalin®, Concerta®, Medikinet®, Equasym®, Xenidate®, Xaggitin XL®, and Matoride®) is mainly used to help treat the symptoms of ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) and narcolepsy
- It is made as plain tablets and long-acting tablets or capsules.

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 (Ritalin®, Medikinet®, Tranquilyn®, Equasym®):
- Take your doses at regular times each day
 - Take the last dose is no later than teatime
- Concerta XL®, Xenidate®, Xaggitin XL®, Matoride®:
- Take before, with or after breakfast
- Medikinet XL®:
- Take in the morning, with or after breakfast
- Equasym XL®:
- Take in the morning **before** breakfast.

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.

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
- See your prescriber for advice if you keep missing doses.

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 or cycle while I am taking it?

- You may feel a bit light-headed at first when taking methylphenidate
- Until you know that it is not affecting you, you should not drive or operate 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:

- Feel hungry, losing weight
- Feel and/or are sick
- Feel nervous, faster heart rate
- Get a cough, sore nose and throat
- Feel dizzy
- Are not being able to sleep.

See your doctor if you get:

- Feelings of being irritable, angry or aggressive.

Please see the 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 prescriber, nurse, pharmacist or other healthcare professional.

The small print: This short leaflet is to help you understand more about your medicine. You must also read the manufacturer's Patient Information Leaflet (PIL). Go to our website for fuller answers to these and many other questions.

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