PATIENT GUIDE

A Short Guide to ADHD Medication

What medication is, how it works, and what to expect — in plain terms.

Medication is one option for managing ADHD — not the only one, and not something you're ever pushed into. If you and your clinician decide it's worth trying, here's what you can expect.

What Medication Does

ADHD medication doesn't change who you are, and it isn't a cure. It works on the parts of the brain involved in attention, focus, and impulse control, making it easier to access skills you already have — things like concentrating, planning, and managing impulses — that can otherwise feel just out of reach.

It affects everyone differently. Some people notice a big difference; others find it helps in some areas but not others. Part of the process is finding out what works for you specifically.

The Two Main Types

- **Stimulant medication** (such as methylphenidate or lisdexamfetamine) — the most commonly prescribed option, often working within hours of taking it.
- **Non-stimulant medication** (such as atomoxetine or guanfacine) — usually considered if stimulants aren't suitable or don't work well for you, and can take a few weeks to reach full effect.

Your clinician will talk through which option makes sense for you — there's no single 'right' choice that suits everyone.

Starting Medication: What to Expect

If you start medication, it begins with a process called titration — finding the right dose for you. This means starting low and adjusting gradually, with regular check-ins, rather than jumping straight to a 'standard' dose. It can take a few weeks to get right, and that's completely normal.

Before you start, we'll check things like your blood pressure, pulse, and general health, and we'll keep checking these throughout — both while your dose is being adjusted and at your regular reviews afterwards.

Possible Side Effects

Like any medication, ADHD medication can cause side effects. The most common ones include reduced appetite, some difficulty sleeping, and a mild increase in heart rate or blood pressure. These are usually manageable and often ease over time — but we monitor for them closely, and you should always tell us if something doesn't feel right.

It's Always Your Choice

You're in control of this decision, every step of the way. You can choose not to try medication at all, pause it, or stop it if it isn't right for you — there's no pressure either way. We're here to give you the information you need to make the choice that's right for you, not to make it for you.

Questions about your medication?

If anything about your medication doesn't feel right, or you just want to talk it through, get in touch with us — don't wait until your next review.

clinical@raiys.com • +44 (0) 203 954 2536