



aadpa

ADHD INFORMATION GUIDE



ATOMOXETINE FOR ADHD

*This guide is for
people with ADHD,
parents, and carers.*

*Always follow your
doctor's advice
and read the
**Consumer Medicines
Information (CMI)**
for full details.*

WHAT IS ATOMOXETINE?

Atomoxetine is a non-stimulant medication used to treat **attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)**. It works by increasing levels of **norepinephrine** in the brain, helping to improve attention, reduce impulsivity, and manage hyperactivity.

Atomoxetine can be prescribed for:

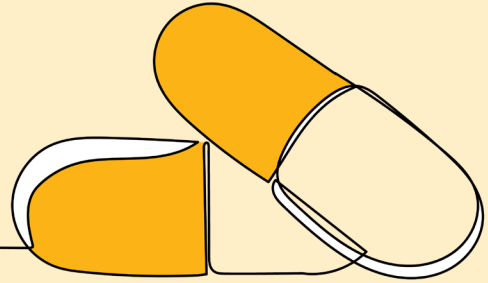
- Children (usually over 6 years), adolescents, and adults with ADHD.
- People who do not tolerate or respond well to stimulant medications.
- Those with co-occurring anxiety or tics, where stimulants may worsen symptoms.

It is usually prescribed under the brand name **Strattera®** in Australia and New Zealand.

Available in 10mg, 18mg, 25mg, 40mg, 60mg, 80mg, and 100mg capsule strengths.

KEY POINTS

- ✓ Atomoxetine is not addictive and is not a controlled drug.
- ✓ Stopping suddenly can make you feel anxious — take it regularly.
- ✓ Avoid alcohol until you know how the medicine affects you.
- ✓ Starting medication is a trial to balance symptom relief with side effects.
- ✓ Keep a diary of changes in mood, appetite, sleep, and attention to share with your doctor.



HOW DOES IT WORK?

- Improves communication between brain cells to reduce ADHD symptoms.
- Usually started at a low dose and slowly increased.
- Takes 2–6 weeks before full benefits are noticed.

HOW TO TAKE ATOMOXETINE

- Take once daily (morning), or twice daily if advised.
- Swallow capsules whole with water — don't crush or open them.
- Can be taken with or without food.
- **If you miss a dose:** Take it when you remember, but skip it if it's nearly time for the next one. Never double up.
- It can take time to find the best dose.

REMEMBER ►

Medication is only one part of ADHD management.

SAFETY AND MONITORING



- Keep medicine locked away and only use if prescribed for you.
- Go to regular check-ups to monitor:
 - treatment effect
 - height, weight, heart rate, blood pressure
 - appetite, sleep, mood, and behaviour
 - liver function (especially if you have existing liver issues).
- If overdose is suspected, call the Poisons Information Line and go to Emergency.

SIDE EFFECTS

COMMON — MAY AFFECT 1 IN 10 OR MORE:

- stomach upset
- loss of appetite
- tiredness or drowsiness
- trouble sleeping.

LESS COMMON BUT IMPORTANT — TELL YOUR DOCTOR IF THESE OCCUR:

- mood changes
- suicidal thoughts (rare, urgent help needed)
- fast heart rate or raised blood pressure
- trouble passing urine (mainly in males)
- irregular heartbeat
- sexual side effects
- liver problems (yellow skin/eyes).

SEEK URGENT HELP IF YOU NOTICE:

- swelling of lips, face, or tongue (allergy)
- chest pain, trouble breathing
- severe headache or high fever
- seizures
- self-harm or suicidal thoughts.



HELPFUL RESOURCES



LINKS

**AUSTRALASIAN ADHD
PROFESSIONALS
ASSOCIATION (AADPA)**

**AADPA – LIVED EXPERIENCE
RESOURCES**

HEALTH DIRECT – ADHD

NPS MEDICINEWISE

ADHD NZ

UNDERSTOOD.ORG

ADHD CARE BEYOND MEDICATION

It's normal to have mixed feelings when starting medication – such as relief, worry, or sadness, especially with a diagnosis later in life. Talking with a psychologist or joining a peer support group can help. Medication is just one part of ADHD support.

Other helpful strategies include:

- **Learning about ADHD** (psychoeducation).
- **Routines and reminders** at home.
- **School strategies** and teacher support.
- **Parenting support** for consistency and behaviour management.
- **Therapy** (behavioural or psychological).
- **Workplace adjustments** for structure and clear expectations.