



DEXAMFETAMINE FOR ADHD

This handout is for individuals, parents and carers. It provides a summary of how Dexamfetamine is used to manage ADHD.

*Always follow your doctor's instructions and refer to the **Consumer Medicines Information (CMI)** for a complete list of side effects.*

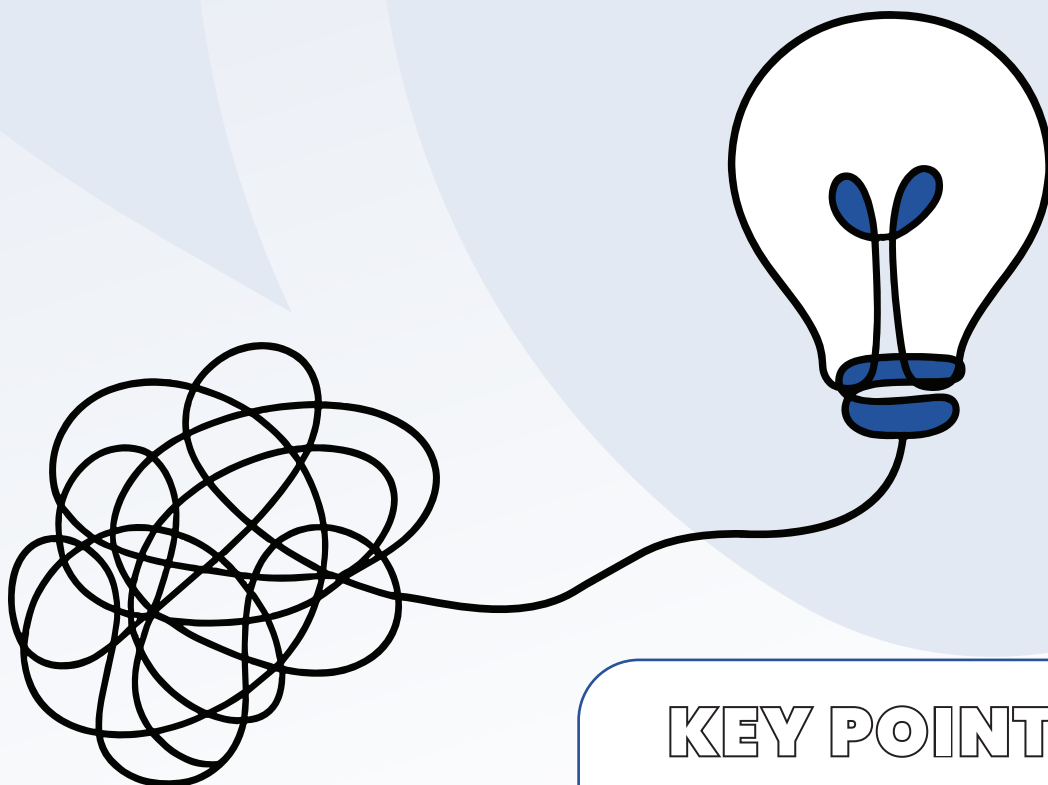
WHAT IS DEXAMFETAMINE?

Dexamfetamine is a **psychostimulant medication** used to treat:

- **ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder)** – to improve ADHD core symptoms of attention concerns, impulsivity, and hyperactivity.
- **Narcolepsy** – excessive daytime sleepiness.

Brand name in Australia/NZ: *Aspen Dexamfetamine or Noumed Dexamfetamine* (immediate release tablets).

- 5mg short-acting tablet. Contains Gluten.
- No commercial long-acting version is available.



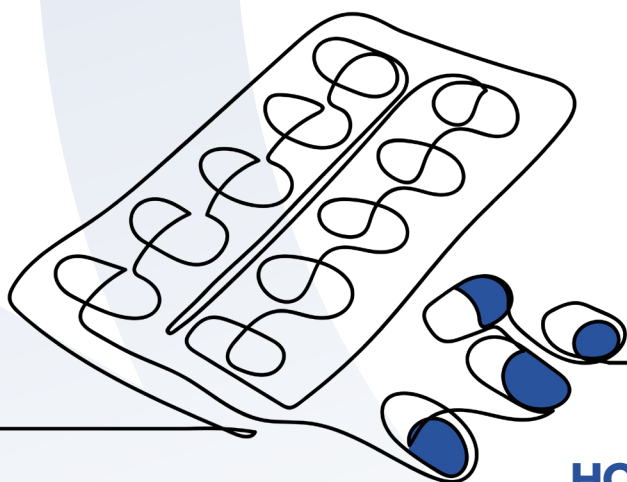
HOW DOES IT WORK?

Dexamfetamine works by:

- **Increasing dopamine and noradrenaline** in the parts of the brain responsible for attention, planning, memory, and impulse control.
- **This improves communication between brain cells**, which helps manage ADHD symptoms.

KEY POINTS

- ✓ Stimulant medications are not addictive when used as prescribed for ADHD
- ✓ You can safely stop stimulants abruptly without withdrawal, but you will no longer be treating your ADHD.
- ✓ Some people take “medication holidays” on weekends or holidays — discuss with your doctor
- ✓ Starting medication is a trial — the goal is maximum symptom support with minimal side effects.
- ✓ If the medication doesn't feel right for you, then discuss this with your health professional.
- ✓ Keep a daily log of any changes in mood, appetite, sleep, and attention to help guide dose adjustments.



HOW TO TAKE DEXAMFETAMINE?

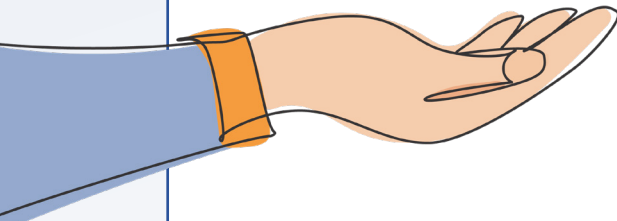
IMPORTANT ▼

Dose (mg) is not transferable between Dexamfetamine and Lisdexamfetamine doses. Each medication requires titration to determine the correct dose for an individual.

- Dexamfetamine is usually taken **2–3 times a day** – Often, the first dose after breakfast, the second dose near midday and sometimes a third dose in the mid-afternoon.
- Take with or after food to minimise side effects such as nausea or loss of appetite.
- Tablets should ideally be swallowed whole, but can be **crushed and mixed with soft food** (e.g. yoghurt or jam) if needed.
- Typically, Dexamfetamine works in 30–60 minutes, with effects lasting 3–4 hours per dose.
- Dexamfetamine is usually **started at a low dose and increased gradually** to optimal effect, as tolerated.
- Medication is just **one part** of managing ADHD.
- It may take **6–8 weeks** to find the best dose for you. Remember, it is a trial.

TIP *Medication timing should be planned to match when focus is needed most.*

MEDICATION SAFETY & MONITORING



- Store securely – preferably in a locked cupboard.
- Follow all directions from your prescribing doctor.
- Attend regular check-ups to monitor:
 - **treatment response**
 - **height and weight**
 - **heart rate and blood pressure**
 - **sleep patterns and appetite**
 - **emotional and behavioural changes.**
- Medication should only be taken by the person it is prescribed for.
- If concerned about possible ingestion or overdose, call your local Poisons Information Line and go to the local Emergency Department for medical review.

POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS

Most side effects are mild and temporary.
Talk to your doctor if you are concerned.

VERY COMMON (1 IN 10 OR MORE):

- **Headache** – usually improves with fluids or paracetamol. Tend to resolve over the first 4–6 weeks of treatment.
- **Reduced appetite** – common during the day, appetite usually returns in the evening.
- **Trouble sleeping** – avoid doses too late in the day; ensure sleep hygiene strategies are optimised.
- **Mood swings** – children may feel teary or irritable when medication wears off (commonly in the afternoon). Tend to resolve over the first 4–6 wks of treatment.

COMMON (LESS THAN 1 IN 10):

- stomach upset, nausea
- anxiety, jitteriness
- sore throat, nasal congestion, achy joints
- dizziness or feeling faint
- rapid heartbeat
- tics (Tics are not caused by the medication, but may fluctuate with it).

UNCOMMON BUT IMPORTANT

(SPEAK TO YOUR DOCTOR IF NOTICED):

- mood changes (aggression, sadness)
- hallucinations
- palpitations
- excessive sweating, unusual limb sensations, or Raynaud's
- bedwetting
- slower growth in children (weight and height must be monitored).

SEEK URGENT MEDICAL HELP IF:

- swelling of lips, face, or tongue (allergic reaction)
- chest pain, shortness of breath
- severe headache or high fever
- seizures
- thoughts of self-harm or suicidal thoughts
- painful, long-lasting erections.



HELPFUL RESOURCES



LINKS

**AUSTRALASIAN ADHD
PROFESSIONALS
ASSOCIATION (AADPA)**

**AADPA – LIVED EXPERIENCE
RESOURCES**

HEALTH DIRECT – ADHD

NPS MEDICINEWISE

ADHD NZ

UNDERSTOOD.ORG

TALK ABOUT IT

If the medication doesn't seem to help or causes distressing side effects, speak to your doctor. Medication is one part of treatment. ADHD is best managed with a multimodal approach, including:

- **Psychoeducation** – understanding ADHD
- **Environmental support** – routines, reminders
- **School strategies** – accommodations and communication
- **Parenting support** – behaviour guidance, consistency
- **Therapy** – behavioural or psychological interventions
- **Workplace support** – structure and clear expectations

EMOTIONAL WELLBEING

Starting medication can bring mixed emotions – relief, uncertainty, or grief, especially in late-diagnosed ADHD. These feelings are valid. Talking to a psychologist or peer support group can help families and individuals process these experiences.