



aadpa

ADHD INFORMATION GUIDE



GUANFACINE FOR ADHD

This guide is for individuals, parents, and carers. It explains how guanfacine is used to manage ADHD.

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

WHAT IS GUANFACINE?

Guanfacine is a **non-stimulant** medicine used to treat ADHD in children and adolescents.

It can help with:

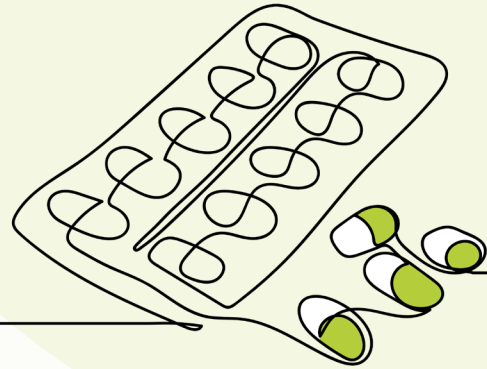
- Impulsivity and hyperactivity
- Emotional regulation
- Sleep difficulties
- Tics (in some cases).

It is often used when stimulants are not suitable or have not worked well.

Brand name (AU/NZ): Intuniv® (extended-release tablets – 1mg, 2mg, 3mg, 4mg)

KEY POINTS

- ✓ Not addictive — not a controlled substance
- ✓ Do **not** stop suddenly — tapering is needed to avoid withdrawal (e.g., high blood pressure, anxiety)
- ✓ Avoid alcohol until you know how guanfacine affects you
- ✓ Finding the right dose is a **trial** — goal is best effect with fewest side effects
- ✓ Keep a daily log of mood, sleep, appetite, and focus
- ✓ Always discuss concerns or side effects with your doctor



HOW DOES IT WORK?

- Stimulates brain receptors involved in attention, impulse control, and emotional regulation.
- Reduces overactive nerve signals, helping calm brain function.
- May take **4–8 weeks** to reach full effect
- Can be used alone or with stimulant medication

HOW TO TAKE GUANFACINE

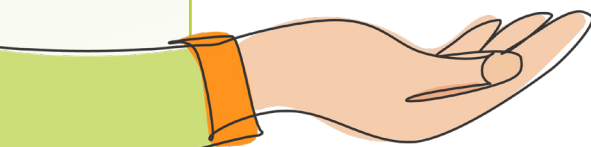
Taken **once daily** — morning or evening (evening, if it causes tiredness).

- Swallow tablets whole — **do not crush, chew, or break.**
- Take with or without food — but keep timing consistent each day.
- If a dose is missed, skip it — don't double up.
- Usually starts at **1mg** — then increased slowly to find the best dose.
- It may take a few weeks to reach the right balance.

REMEMBER ►

Medication is only one part of ADHD management.

SAFETY AND MONITORING



- Store securely, ideally in a locked cupboard.
- Only the prescribed person should take it.
- Regular check-ups will monitor:
 - ADHD symptom response
 - height and weight
 - heart rate and blood pressure
 - sleep, appetite, emotions, and behaviour
 - **liver function** (especially if you have liver concerns).
- In case of accidental ingestion or overdose, call the Poisons Information Line and seek emergency care.

POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS

Most are mild and temporary. Talk to your doctor if worried.

VERY COMMON (≥ 1 IN 10):

- sleepiness or drowsiness (especially at first)
- fatigue or feeling slowed down
- constipation, stomach upset, nausea
- dizziness, especially when standing quickly
- headache.

UNCOMMON — SEE YOUR DR IF NOTICED:

- low blood pressure or slow heart rate
- bedwetting (in children)
- worsening mood or behaviour.

SEEK URGENT HELP IF YOU NOTICE:

- allergic reaction (swelling of lips, face, or tongue)
- chest pain or shortness of breath
- fainting
- thoughts of self-harm or suicide.



HELPFUL RESOURCES



LINKS

**AUSTRALASIAN ADHD
PROFESSIONALS
ASSOCIATION (AADPA)**

**AADPA – LIVED EXPERIENCE
RESOURCES**

HEALTH DIRECT – ADHD

NPS MEDICINEWISE

ADHD NZ

UNDERSTOOD.ORG

BEYOND MEDICATION

ADHD is best managed with a **multimodal approach**, including:

- Education about ADHD.
- Supportive routines and reminders.
- School adjustments and teacher communication.
- Parenting strategies for consistency and behaviour guidance.
- Therapy (psychological or behavioural).
- Workplace supports such as structure and clear expectations.

EMOTIONAL WELLBEING

Starting medication can bring relief but also uncertainty or grief, especially with a late diagnosis. These feelings are normal. Support from a psychologist or peer group can help.