

Information for patients, families, and carers

Shortage of medicines for ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) in Adults – 6 Oct 2023 (separate advice available for children)

Your local pharmacy, GP surgery and ADHD service work hard to make sure you get the medicines you need, when you need them, but sometimes we experience difficulties in sourcing medicines.

Unfortunately, there is a national shortage of a number of the medicines we use in ADHD because of increased global demand and manufacturing problems.

What brands are affected by the shortage?

The following brands are currently affected:

Methylphenidate

- Equasym XL® 10, 20, and 30mg capsules
- Xaggitin XL® 18 and 36mg and Xenidate XL® 27mg prolonged-release tablets

Lisdexamphetamine

- Elvanse® 50, 60 and 70mg capsules
- Elvanse® Adult 30 and 50 capsules

Guanfacine

- Intuniv® 1, 2, 3 and 4mg prolonged-release tablets

Another ADHD medicine has been out of stock:

Atomoxetine

- Atomoxetine 10mg, 25mg, 40mg and 60mg capsules

How long will the shortage last?

The shortage is expected to resolve at various dates between October and December 2023.

Is this shortage affecting all pharmacies?

This is a national shortage affecting all suppliers. Other ADHD products remain available, but we do not think there will be enough of these to cover any shortages of the affected brands. In some cases, where it is safe to do so, a short break in treatment may be needed.

Should I request my next prescription early?

You should request your prescription in the usual way, making sure you allow at least 7 days before you run out of medication.

Please note one of the ADHD medicines affected called guanfacine (Intuniv®) must not be stopped abruptly and there is separate advice on this – see overleaf.

What should I do if I cannot get my ADHD prescription from the pharmacy?

Firstly, try other pharmacies as another one may have it in stock. You can use the find my pharmacy to help you locate the pharmacies and their contact details that are close by to you:

[Find a pharmacy - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk).

What should I do if I cannot get my ADHD prescription from the pharmacy (continued)?

If your ADHD medicine is either the brand Xaggitin XL® or Xenidate XL® your GP surgery should be able to provide a prescription for an alternative brand which is considered equivalent.

For all other ADHD medicines affected see below.

- For young adults still under the care of Ryegate Neurodisability teams or Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) please contact:
 - Ryegate: call the prescription line and leave a voicemail message (0114 2717643)
 - CAMHS: contact your care co-ordinator.
- If you are under a private ADHD specialist, you should contact them directly.
- For everyone else, please contact your GP surgery.

Are there alternative medications available?

There are no direct alternatives for Equasym XL® (methylphenidate), lisdexamfetamine, guanfacine and atomoxetine. As this is a short-term supply problem, we do not recommend that you change your medication treatment. Instead, we recommend that you try to find other ways to manage your ADHD symptoms. We appreciate that this may be difficult.

Is it safe to stop taking methylphenidate, atomoxetine or lisdexamfetamine if I run out?

Yes, it is safe. It is common practice to have treatment holidays to assess continued need of ADHD medication, and stopping treatment in this way is not associated with significant withdrawal symptoms. After you stop your medication, you may find that you do not need to continue taking it. You should still discuss any break in treatment with your ADHD specialist or GP surgery.

Is it safe to stop taking guanfacine if I run out?

Guanfacine (Intuniv®) must always be stopped slowly as it can cause your blood pressure to increase if stopped suddenly. During this short-term supply problem, we recommend you keep enough lower strength tablets to be able to reduce the dose slowly in case you can not get hold of your repeat prescription. This reduction will depend on your current dose.

ADHD specialists are working closely with GP surgeries. You should contact your GP surgery or ADHD service for further advice.

What if stopping my ADHD medication affects my ability to concentrate at school or work?

We recommend that you mention this short break in treatment to them; so that a plan can be put in place during this time.

If I have a break in treatment with my ADHD medication, can I restart my medication once it is available?

If you take guanfacine (Intuniv®) and have a break in treatment lasting longer than 2 consecutive days, it is important that the medicine is restarted slowly, and this will usually be overseen by a specialist. Please contact your ADHD specialist or GP surgery for advice.

If you take methylphenidate, atomoxetine or lisdexamfetamine and have a break in treatment you should contact your ADHD specialist or GP surgery for advice.