



Atomoxetine for ADHD

This leaflet is about the use of atomoxetine for attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder, known as ADHD. Drug treatment may form part of a comprehensive treatment programme for ADHD that includes behavioural therapy. The diagnosis of ADHD must have been confirmed by a specialist.



This leaflet has been written specifically about the use of this medicine in children. The information may differ from that provided by the manufacturer. Please read this leaflet carefully. Keep it somewhere safe so that you can read it again.

Do not suddenly stop giving atomoxetine without talking to your doctor first.

Name of drug

Atomoxetine

Brand names: Strattera®

Why is it important to take this medicine?

Atomoxetine will help to reduce the symptoms of hyperactivity and impulsive behaviour and to increase attention and concentration span. It is used as part of a comprehensive treatment programme.

What is atomoxetine available as?

- **Capsules:** 10 mg (white), 18 mg (gold/white), 25 mg (blue/white), 40 mg (blue), 60 mg (blue/gold), 80 mg (brown/white)

When should I give atomoxetine?

Atomoxetine is usually given once or twice each day. Your doctor will tell you how often to give it.

- **Once a day:** this should be in morning.
- **Twice a day:** this should be once in the morning and once in the late afternoon. It should not be given too close to bedtime.

Give the medicine at about the same time(s) each day so that this becomes part of your child's daily routine, which will help you to remember.

How much should I give?

Your doctor will work out the amount of atomoxetine (the dose) that is right for *your* child. The dose will be shown on the medicine label.

Your doctor will probably start with a low dose and then increase it gradually to find the lowest dose that works for your child.

 **It is important that you follow your doctor's instructions about how much to give.**

How should I give it?



Capsules should be swallowed with a glass of water, milk or juice with or without food. Your child should not chew the capsule.

When should the medicine start working?

It will take a few weeks for atomoxetine to work properly so you may not see much difference in your child's symptoms to start with. It is important that you continue to give the medicine as you have been told to by your doctor.

What if my child is sick (vomits)?

- If your child is sick less than 30 minutes after having a dose of atomoxetine, give them the same dose again.
- If your child is sick more than 30 minutes after having a dose of atomoxetine you **do not** need to give them another dose. Wait until the next normal dose.

What if I forget to give it?

If you usually give it once a day

Give the missed dose when you remember during the day, as long as this is at least 12 hours before the next dose is due.

If you normally give it twice a day

If you remember up to 4 hours after you should have given a dose, give your child the missed dose. For example, if you usually give a dose at about 7 am, you can give the missed dose at any time up to 11 am. If you remember after that time, do not give the missed dose. Just give the next dose as usual.



Never give a double dose of atomoxetine.

What if I give too much?

You are unlikely to do harm if you give an extra dose of atomoxetine by mistake. If you are concerned that you may have given too much, contact your doctor or NHS Direct (0845 4647 in England and Wales; 08454 24 24 in Scotland). Have the medicine or packaging with you if you telephone for advice.

Are there any possible side-effects?

We use medicines to make our children better, but sometimes they have other effects that we don't want (side-effects).

Side effects you must do something about



If your child has dark urine, a yellowish tinge to their skin or the whites of the eyes, tenderness on the right side of the stomach just below the ribs, feelings of sickness (nausea), tiredness, itching, or flu-like symptoms, contact your doctor **straight away** as there may be a problem with your child's liver.



Occasionally some children who take atomoxetine have suicidal thoughts (thoughts of killing themselves) or become hostile (aggressive, arguing a lot, angry) or may seem emotionally unstable. If your child has any of these reactions, or you are at all worried, contact your doctor **straight away**.

Other side-effects you need to know about:

- When your child first starts taking atomoxetine, they may have headaches, lose their appetite, feel sick (nausea) or be sick (vomit), have stomach pain and feel sleepy. These effects should wear off after a week or two your child's body gets used to the medicine.
- Your child may seem irritable and have mood swings.
- Your child may feel dizzy or light-headed, especially when standing up. Encourage them to stand up slowly, and to sit or lie down if they feel dizzy or light-headed.
- They may have problems sleeping or feel lethargic (weary).
- They may get constipation (difficulty doing a poo), Encourage them to drink plenty of fluid and to eat food that contains fibre (e.g. wholemeal foods, fruit and vegetables).
- They may get a rash, or swollen, reddened and itchy skin. Contact your doctor or pharmacist if this becomes troublesome.
- Your child may lose some weight during the first few months of treatment although they will probably put the weight back on.
- Atomoxetine may affect the growth of some children. The specialist will monitor your child's growth.

Can other medicines be given at the same time as atomoxetine?

- You can give your child medicines that contain paracetamol or ibuprofen, unless your doctor has told you not to.
- Atomoxetine should not be taken with some medicines that you get on prescription. Tell your doctor and pharmacist about any other medicines your child is taking before giving atomoxetine.

 Tell your doctor or pharmacist if your child has taken a medicine known as a monoamine oxidase inhibitor (MAOI), for example phenelzine, in the last 2 weeks (used to treat depression and other mental health problems).

- Check with your doctor or pharmacist **before** giving any other medicines to your child. This includes herbal or complementary medicines.

General advice about medicines

- Try to give medicines at about the same times each day, to help you remember.
- If you are not sure a medicine is working, contact your doctor but continue to give the medicine as usual in the meantime. Do not give extra doses, as you may do harm.
- Only give this medicine to *your* child. Never give it to anyone else, even if their condition appears to be the same, as this could do harm.

 If you think someone else may have taken the medicine by accident, contact your doctor straight away.

- Make sure that you always have enough medicine. Order a new prescription at least 2 weeks before you will run out.
- Make sure that the medicine you have at home has not reached the 'best before' or 'use by' date on the packaging. Give old medicines to your pharmacist to dispose of.

Where I should keep this medicine?

- Keep the medicine in a cupboard, away from heat and direct sunlight. It does not need to be kept in the fridge.
- Make sure that children cannot see or reach the medicine.
- Keep the medicine in the container it came in.

Who to contact for more information

Your doctor, pharmacist will be able to give you more information about atomoxetine and about other medicines used to treat ADHD.

You can also get useful information from:

NHS Direct (England)

0845 4647

www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk

NHS 24 (Scotland)

08454 24 24 24

www.nhs24.com

NHS Direct Wales/Galw Iechyd Cymru

0845 4647

www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk

NI Direct (Northern Ireland)

www.nidirect.gov.uk

ADDISS (ADHD Information Services)

020 8952 2800

www.addiss.co.uk

www.medicinesforchildren.org.uk



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The primary source for the information in this leaflet is the British National Formulary for Children. For details on any other sources used for this leaflet, please contact us through our website, www.medicinesforchildren.org.uk

We take great care to make sure that the information in this leaflet is correct and up-to-date. However, medicines can be used in different ways for different patients. It is important that you ask the advice of your doctor or pharmacist if you are not sure about something. This leaflet is about the use of these medicines in the UK, and may not apply to other countries. The Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH), the Neonatal and Paediatric Pharmacists Group (NPPG), WellChild and the contributors and editors cannot be held responsible for the accuracy of information, omissions of information, or any actions that may be taken as a consequence of reading this leaflet.