

Atomoxetine for ADHD

This leaflet is about the use of atomoxetine for attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Medicines are a part of a comprehensive treatment programme that includes behavioural therapy. The diagnosis of ADHD must have been confirmed by a specialist.



This leaflet is for parents and carers about how to use this medicine in children. Our information sometimes differs from that provided by the manufacturers, because their information is usually aimed at adults. 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 medicine

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 increase attention and concentration span. It is used as part of a comprehensive treatment programme that includes behavioural therapy.

What is atomoxetine available as?

- **Capsules:** 10 mg, 18 mg, 25 mg, 40 mg, 60 mg, 80 mg, 100 mg; these contain gelatin.
- **Liquid medicine:** 4 mg in 1 mL oral solution; this contains sorbitol.

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?

Atomoxetine can be taken with or without food.



Capsules should be swallowed with a glass of water, milk or juice. Your child should not chew the capsules.



Liquid medicine: Measure out the right amount using an oral syringe. You can get these from your pharmacist. Do not use a kitchen teaspoon as it will not give the right amount.

The liquid medicine should not be mixed in to food or drinks as this can decrease the amount your child gets.

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.

If your child is sick again, seek advice from your family doctor, pharmacist or hospital.

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.


What if I give too much?


You are unlikely to cause harm if you give an extra dose of atomoxetine by mistake. If you think you may have given your child too much atomoxetine, contact your doctor or local NHS services (details at end of leaflet). 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, 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 1-2 weeks as 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 (tired).
- They may get constipation (difficulty doing a poo). Encourage them to drink plenty of fluid and eat food that contains fibre (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. Contact your doctor if you are concerned.
- Atomoxetine may affect the growth of some children. The specialist will monitor your child's growth.

There may, sometimes, be other side-effects that are not listed above. If you notice anything unusual and are concerned, contact your doctor. You can report any suspected side-effects to a UK safety scheme at www.mhra.gov.uk/yellowcard

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. Tell your doctor or 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) e.g. 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 and complementary medicines.

Is there anything else I need to know about this medicine?



Atomoxetine may harm an unborn baby. If your daughter or a young woman in your care is sexually active, it is important that she uses adequate contraception to prevent pregnancy and continues to use it for at least month after stopping atomoxetine. The contraceptive pill can be used when taking atomoxetine.

- If your daughter or a young woman in your care thinks she might be pregnant, she should see her doctor as soon as possible, but keep taking atomoxetine in the meantime.
- Whilst taking atomoxetine, your child will need to have their pulse and blood pressure checked regularly. Your doctor will tell you how often.

General advice about medicines

- 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 '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.
- The liquid medicine can only be used for a limited time once it has been opened. Write the date that you start it on the bottle and make sure you follow the instructions on the bottle about how long you can keep it.
- 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 child's doctor, pharmacist or nurse will be able to give you more information about atomoxetine and about other treatments for ADHD.

You can also get useful information from:

England: NHS 111 - Tel 111 - www.nhs.uk

Scotland: NHS 24 - Tel 111 - www.nhs24.scot

Wales: NHS 111 Wales - Tel 111 - www.111.wales.nhs.uk

Northern Ireland: NI Direct - www.nidirect.gov.uk

ADDISS (ADHD Information Services):

Tel 020 8952 2800 - www.addiss.co.uk

www.medicinesforchildren.org.uk