

ADHD medication shortages 2023: Information for patients and families

Supporting resource in response to the [NATIONAL CLINICAL ALERT](#) [NatPSA/2023/011/DHSC](#)

Introduction

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) can be managed by changes in lifestyle, diet, having social/family relationships for support, as well as attending peer support or for children parenting groups. For a proportion of children and adults in addition to this, they may need ADHD medication to help with perhaps attention, concentration or feeling less physically or mentally 'on the go'.

What is the current situation?

At the moment, there are problems with the availability and supply of a range of medication used to treat ADHD. There are supplies of medication coming in, but this is changing every day.

Why is this happening?

There is no one reason why there are shortages in the ADHD medication supply. There has been an increase in demand for medication to manage ADHD. There has also been a change in the companies who produce and supply the medication. Some have stopped making certain strengths and others have stopped making certain products. All of this combined has led to difficulties in meeting the supply needs of patients.

How long is this likely to be the case?

At the moment, it is expected this will remain the situation for supply until start of January 2024.

Which medicines are effected?

The following medication are in short supply and at times also showing as 'not available'. However, there are ADHD medication coming into the UK and supply available is changing all of the time.

Methylphenidate:

Equasym XL® 10, 20 and 30 mg capsules

Xaggitin XL® 18 and 36 mg prolonged-release tablets

Concerta XL® 54 mg prolonged-release tablets

Xenidate XL® 27 mg prolonged-release tablets

Lisdexamfetamine:

Elvanse® 20mg, 30mg, 40mg, 50mg, 60mg and 70 mg capsules

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

Guanfacine:

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

Atomoxetine:

Capsules 10mg, 25mg, 40mg and 60mg

Oral solution 4mg/ml

What should I do as a patient/ parent/ carer?

For now, please continue with the medication you/ or your child has been prescribed.

Please order repeat medication from your GP with at least between 7-14 days supply left of medication.

Check with your usual pharmacy if they have the medication or they can order it in when you give the prescription.

Check with nearby pharmacies if you are able to- to see if they have and/ or able to order in the medication.

If you are not sure what to do OR the medication is not available, then please contact your GP or specialist team at the earliest opportunity for advice and help

What will happen if the medication I/ my child's is taking is not available

Please contact your GP at the earliest opportunity, if your medication is a regular repeat from the GP surgery.

Please contact your specialist service, if you are open to secondary care for prescribing and/ or you/ your child has only recently started ADHD medication.

Specialist team refers to for example, adult ADHD service, Child development centre, children services or child and adolescent mental health team. If you are with a specialist team, their contact details will be on your appointment letter.

Where the medication or a particularly strength of a medication is not available, your GP/ member of the specialist team will talk to you about other medication strengths or options available.

Information for parents/ carers: medication at school

If your child is having medication administered at school by staff it is important to let the school special needs (SEN) team know about the shortages in ADHD medication.

The advice would be to agree a plan with the school SEN team and class teacher to help support your child whilst they are at school- in the event your child attends school and has not taken their ADHD medication.

Schools generally like to keep an 'original pack' labelled for the child at school. Due to the current shortages, it may not be possible to provide a separate supply for home and school. The advice would be to share the medication between home and school and agree with the school who the medication should be handed to at the start of the school day and who will hand it back to the parent at the end of the school day.

In cases, where the ADHD medication is needing to be shared between home and school, please request the next prescription when you have 14 days of medication left. This should allow enough time for the prescription to come from GP/ specialist team and for the pharmacy to source the medication.

If you or the SEN team would like advice and support please contact your child's CAMHS team.

If you are open to social care- please let your social worker/ family support worker know of the shortages.

Please be patient with services as there will be delays in getting changed prescriptions and medication across areas. Specialist services, GPs and community pharmacies are working together to ensure the disruption to the supply of ADHD medication affects patients as little as possible.

If you have any worries or concerns please contact your GP surgery or specialist team for help/ advice.