

# Proper Use of ADHD Medication

Be **AWARE**™



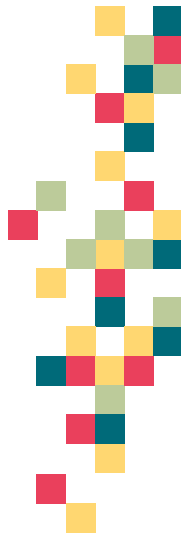


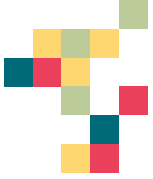
# ADHD Medications— Stimulants

Most Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) medications are stimulants, such as amphetamine and methylphenidate. Stimulant medications for ADHD may be effective when used as part of a total treatment plan, which may include counseling and other therapies.

As with any medication, proper use is important. Stimulant medications for ADHD are controlled substances (regulated by the federal government) and need to be handled in a serious manner because they have a high risk of abuse and dependence.

It is also important to know that selling or giving away your medication may harm others and it is illegal. That's why it's important to understand the appropriate use of stimulants.






# How Widespread Is the Improper Use of Stimulants?

Although there is no way of knowing exactly how often stimulants are used improperly, a 2012 National Survey on Drug Use and Health conducted by US Department of Health and Human Services identified the following estimates.

## IMPROPER USE OF STIMULANTS

▶ **8.9 million** people aged 12 or older were current users of illicit drugs\* *of which* **1.2 million**  were using stimulants for nonmedical use.

▶  More than half of people using prescription pain relievers, tranquilizers, stimulants, and sedatives for nonmedical use said they got them “from a friend or relative for free.”

\*Illicit drugs include cocaine/crack, heroin, hallucinogens, and inhalants, as well as the nonmedical use of prescription-type pain relievers, tranquilizers, stimulants, and sedatives. Marijuana/hashish was excluded from the estimate.

# Staying AWARE™

– Suggestions for Appropriate Stimulant Use

As you learn how stimulants can be improperly used, here are some suggestions on how to encourage proper use.

**The key to proper stimulant use is being AWARE.**

Here’s a simple way to remember the most important steps in preventing the misuse, abuse, and diversion of stimulant medication in yourself, your family, or friends. Read on for more information about misuse, abuse, and diversion.

### Be:

- A** Act to ensure appropriate stimulant use
- W** Watch for any unusual behavioral or physical signs
- A** Assess your and your child’s medication and symptoms often
- R** Regulate and monitor your or your child’s medication use
- E** Educate yourself and your child on the dangers of improper use





# What You Should Know About Improper Stimulant Use

Prescription stimulants should never be used without a prescription. No matter what term you use to describe it, using a prescription medication in a way that does not follow the prescription or that is not yours can be dangerous and it's against the law. Stimulant medications aren't safer than street drugs just because they are prescribed.

**Terms used to describe improper stimulant use include misuse, abuse, and diversion.**

## Misuse

Misuse of a prescription stimulant happens any time the medicine is used in a way that is different from the doctor's instructions. Misuse could be:

- Taking an extra pill of your own prescription stimulant to concentrate while studying
- Taking a friend's prescription stimulant because you think you have ADHD

## Abuse

Using a prescription medicine to get high or taking a prescription stimulant to see how it makes you feel is considered abuse. Stimulants have a high potential for abuse, and should be used only as directed.

## Diversion

Diversion occurs when someone other than the person whose name is on the prescription uses it. Examples are giving your medication to a friend or taking medication from a sibling.

There are a number of possible side effects that may occur as a result of taking too much stimulant at one time or taking large doses over an extended period of time. These include, but are not limited to:

- Dizziness
- Tremor
- Headache
- Flushed skin
- Chest pain with palpitations (rapid beating of the heart)
- Excessive sweating
- Vomiting
- Stomach cramps
- Agitation
- Hostility
- Panic
- Aggression
- Suicidal or homicidal tendencies (thinking about harming yourself or others)
- Paranoia, sometimes along with seeing things or hearing voices that are not real

Signs of overdose with stimulants often include high fever, convulsions, and cardiovascular collapse (sudden loss of blood flow due to heart or blood vessel dysfunction). If you or someone you care for takes too much ADHD medication or overdoses, call a doctor or poison control center or call 911 right away.





# Be Safe With Your Medicine

If you have been prescribed medication for the treatment of ADHD, be sure to take it exactly as directed by your doctor. Store your medication in a safe place. Count the pills regularly to make sure no one else is using them. Selling or giving away your prescription medication may harm others and is against the law. There are state and federal laws that punish the misuse, abuse, and diversion of stimulant medication prescribed for ADHD.

**For more information talk to your doctor or visit the following resources:**

- National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) at [nimh.nih.gov](http://nimh.nih.gov)
- National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) at [nida.nih.gov](http://nida.nih.gov)
- The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) at [samhsa.gov](http://samhsa.gov)
- Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) at [dea.gov](http://dea.gov)



# Talk to Your Child's Doctor

Your child's doctor is your best resource for evaluating your child's ADHD. He or she will determine the treatment to help manage your child's ADHD symptoms.

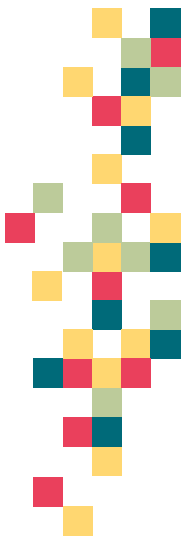
When the doctor prescribes a medication to treat your child's ADHD, it is essential for you to understand the proper use of the medication.

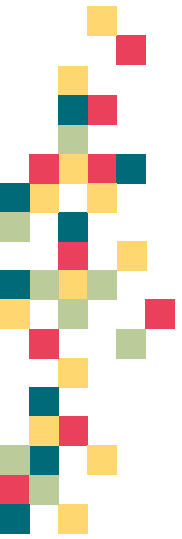
**Make sure to ask your child's doctor about the following:**

- What type of ADHD medication is my child taking?
- What steps can I take to help ensure my child is taking his or her ADHD medication correctly?
- What should I do if I think my child is misusing, abusing, or diverting his or her ADHD medication?

## Working Together to Ensure Proper Stimulant Use

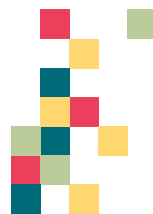
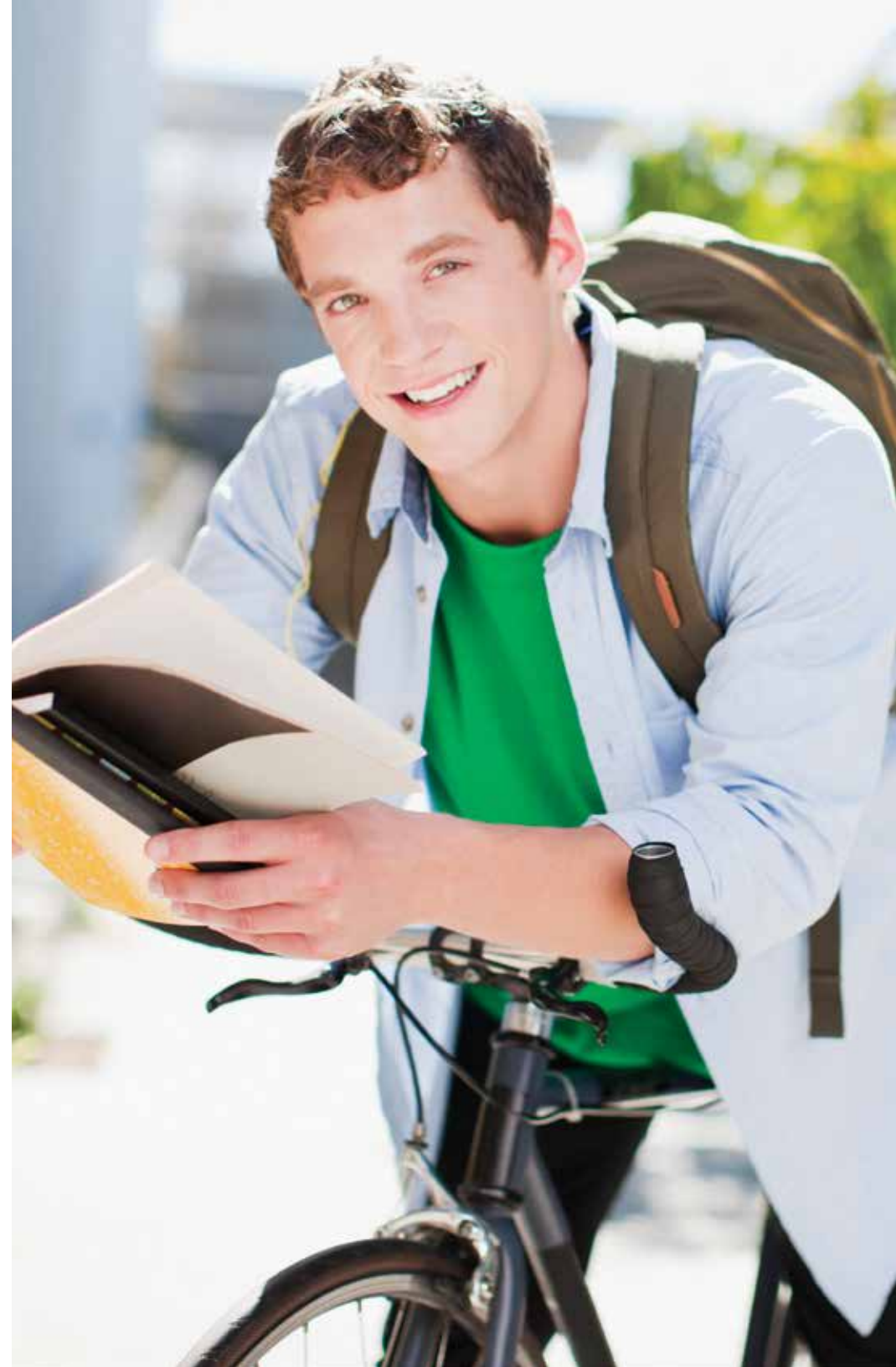
We at Shire are dedicated to working with health care professionals and parents to help ensure safe and effective treatment for ADHD. We are committed to creating materials to help educate you about the risks and benefits of stimulants and to promote appropriate stimulant use.





## Where can I get more information about ADHD?

For more information, visit [www.ADHDandYou.com](http://www.ADHDandYou.com).





Keep this guide as a handy resource for  
proper use of prescription medication.

This resource is sponsored by  
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