

Dear Parent/Carer

National supply shortage of medicines for ADHD

NHS England, along with the Department of Health and Social Care, have been in touch to tell us about a shortage of some licensed medications for the treatment of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).

We are writing to let you know that this supply disruption could affect you as the following medicines are affected by this shortage:

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

Guanfacine:

- Intuniv 1, 2, 3 and 4 mg prolonged-release tablet

Although we are doing all we can to address this shortage, we need you to be prepared for potential challenges this could bring over the next few weeks.

We have written some frequently asked questions and answers:

How long will the shortage last?

We hope the supply disruptions will resolve at various dates between October and December 2023. The shortage is caused by a combination of manufacturing issues and an increase in global demand.

Unfortunately, these circumstances are beyond our control, but please be assured that we are aware of this situation and doing all we can to help.

Are there alternative medications available?

Other ADHD products remain available, but they may not be suitable for everyone and may not be able to meet the increases in demand.

We know how important getting your child's medication is. Your specialist community paediatric service is always happy to talk to you about their medicines and to explain why getting your child's medicine may be difficult right now.

If we need to make changes to your child's medication due to shortages, we will contact you to offer a choice between taking a treatment break or changing your child's medication to one that is not currently affected by the supply shortage.

If this happens, when you collect the next prescription, the branding or dosage may look different to what you usually have. The pharmacist should be able to explain and discuss this with you.

Once the supply shortage has been resolved, your medication will be changed back to the medicine previously prescribed.

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

Please be aware that there may still be delays at pharmacies in obtaining the alternative prescribed medication.

If one pharmacy is unable to obtain supplies, please try a different pharmacy. Pharmacies may use different suppliers to source medicines so availability will depend on whether each pharmacy's suppliers have stock or not.

Where there is a known shortage of a medicine, supply levels can change quickly. This is why pharmacies in one area may be able to find a medicine and others may not.

Alternatively, it may be best to leave the prescription with your nominated pharmacy who can check wholesaler stock levels daily and place an order.

If you are concerned because your pharmacist cannot get a supply, please contact us as soon as possible. Contact details can be found at the end of this letter.

Is it safe to stop taking ADHD medication abruptly?

Please consult your child's specialist for guidance if you think you are running out of medication. Guidelines do recommend having regular treatment breaks from ADHD medications. So, it is not unusual to stop taking medication over the weekend or during school holidays. Therefore, no harm should come from stopping the medication, but this should be done in a planned way.

IMPORTANT NOTE: If your child is prescribed Guanfacine (Intuniv) please contact their specialist service, as this medication must be stopped slowly as it can cause your blood pressure to increase if stopped suddenly. Consult your child's specialist service as soon as possible if you cannot get their prescription from the pharmacy.

Where can I get more help and advice?

Alternative therapies: We can provide guidance on alternative therapies, such as behavioural interventions that may help manage ADHD symptoms in the absence of medication. Please contact us for advice on the contact details below.

Patient support groups: Joining local or online support groups for ADHD patients and families can be helpful during times of medication shortage. These groups often share information and experiences. Some examples include:

- ADDvanced solutions: www.addvancedsolutions.co.uk
- ADHD foundation: www.adhdfoundation.org.uk
- ADHD solutions: www.adhdsolutions.org
- ADHD and You: www.adhdandyou.co.uk
- ADDIS (national ADHD information service): <http://www.addiss.co.uk/>

If you have any questions about the contents of this letter, please do contact us:

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Sincerely,

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