

Dexmethylphenidate

Focalin, Focalin XR, Azstarys (with serdexmethylphenidate), a stimulant medicine for attention and focus

This medicine is the working half of methylphenidate, so it does the same job for attention at a smaller amount.

WHAT IT TREATS

ADHD

HOW YOU TAKE IT

Morning; short form twice

WHEN IT WORKS

Within about an hour

HABIT FORMING

Yes; a controlled medicine

⚠️ IMPORTANT SAFETY WARNING

This is a controlled medicine. Taken the way it is prescribed and kept somewhere safe, it is a well-studied treatment. Misuse - bigger amounts, snorting, or injecting - can cause overdose, death, and dependence. Never share it or sell it.

① WHAT THIS MEDICINE DOES

- **Dexmethylphenidate** is the active half of methylphenidate, so the same help with focus comes at half the amount.
- It helps you or your child stay with a task, tune out noise, and take a beat before acting on an impulse.
- The short form covers about **4 to 6 hours** and the long capsule covers about 12, so the form is picked to fit the day.
- It is a tool, not a personality change. Nobody should feel like a different or duller person on the right amount.

🕒 HOW TO TAKE IT

- Take it in the morning, with or without food. Eating a full breakfast first is smart because appetite drops later.
- If you take the short form twice a day, space the doses at least **4 hours** apart the way your prescriber laid out.
- The long capsule can be opened and sprinkled on a spoon of applesauce, eaten right away. Never crush or chew the beads.
- If a dose is missed and the afternoon is half gone, skip it. Taking it late usually means a hard time falling asleep.
- Keep it locked up or well out of reach, and keep track of how many are left in the bottle.

📈 WHAT TO EXPECT

- You should notice a difference the first day, usually within an hour. This is not a medicine that takes weeks to work.
- Working well means less rereading the same paragraph, fewer lost items, and calmer transitions between activities.
- The long capsule releases in two waves, so an early afternoon slump often means the timing needs a tweak, not more medicine.
- Crankiness or a burst of hyperactivity as it wears off is called rebound. It is more common with the short form.
- For children, expect height and weight to be plotted at least every **6 months**, since growth can slow while on treatment.

♥️ COMMON SIDE EFFECTS

- Lower appetite during the day is the most common effect. Anchor calories at breakfast and at a relaxed dinner.
- Keep filling snacks on hand for the hour hunger comes back: yogurt, cheese sticks, trail mix, or a milk-based smoothie.
- Sleep can be hard to start. The usual fix is an earlier dose and a quiet wind-down hour, so ask before shifting anything.
- Stomachache and headache are common early and usually settle within a couple of weeks. Take it with food and drink water.
- Dry mouth and a jittery feeling can happen. Water, gum, and cutting back on other caffeine usually take care of it.
- Small rises in heart rate and blood pressure are expected, which is why those get checked at each appointment.

⚠️ CALL YOUR PRESCRIBER OR GET HELP RIGHT AWAY IF

- Chest pain, fainting, or a very fast heartbeat, especially with exercise: call **911**.
- Hearing voices, seeing things, or a sudden burst of racing, unstoppable energy: hold the dose and call that day.
- New tics, jerks, or sounds that you or your child cannot control: call your prescriber before the next dose.
- New or worse thoughts of hurting yourself: call or text **988** now, or go to the nearest emergency room.

🚫 WHAT TO AVOID

- Do not mix it with alcohol. Alcohol feels less strong than it is while a stimulant is working, which leads to trouble.
- Cut back on energy drinks, strong coffee, and decongestant cold medicine, because they add to the jitters and heart rate.
- Never take it within **14 days** of an MAOI antidepressant, and tell any surgeon or dentist before a procedure.
- Giving or selling pills to a friend, even one who says they need them, is dangerous for them and against the law.
- Talk with your prescriber before pregnancy or breastfeeding so you can weigh the pros and cons together.

⏸️ STOPPING IT SAFELY

- You do not have to taper, but stopping cold after long use can bring a few flat, tired, very hungry days.
- Planned breaks over summer or on weekends are an option for some families. Make that call with your prescriber.
- As a controlled medicine, this needs a new prescription each time. Call about a **week** ahead so you do not run out.
- If it feels like it quit working, do not add a dose on your own. Timing, sleep, or the form is often the real problem.

❓ QUESTIONS TO ASK

- Should we use the short form, the long capsule, or both together?
- What is the plan if the afternoon slump or rebound gets rough?
- How will we track growth and weight over the next year?
- How far ahead do I need to call for each new prescription?

Where this information comes from

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NOTE

Sources are listed in APA 7th edition style. This handout is general information about a medicine, not medical advice, and it does not replace the instructions from your own prescriber or pharmacist. Never start, change, or stop a medicine on your own. If you think you are having a serious reaction, call your prescriber; if you cannot breathe, cannot stay awake, or are thinking of harming yourself, call 911 or 988 right away.