

STEP 2:

UNDERSTAND YOUR MEDICATION OPTIONS

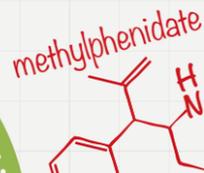
Treating ADHD can be confusing, but you are not alone.

11% of kids in the U.S. have an ADHD diagnosis, and 74% of those children use medication to help manage symptoms. Follow along as we explain the most popular medication options, and how they differ.

1 Stimulants: the first line of defense

The stimulant class of medication works for **80%** of children with ADHD.

Stimulants increase neurotransmitter levels of dopamine and norepinephrine between the brain's synapses, the junctions between certain networks of neurons. The result: improved hyperactivity, distractibility, and/or impulsivity.



There are 29 FDA-approved stimulant medications. All of them use only one of two molecules: methylphenidate or amphetamine.

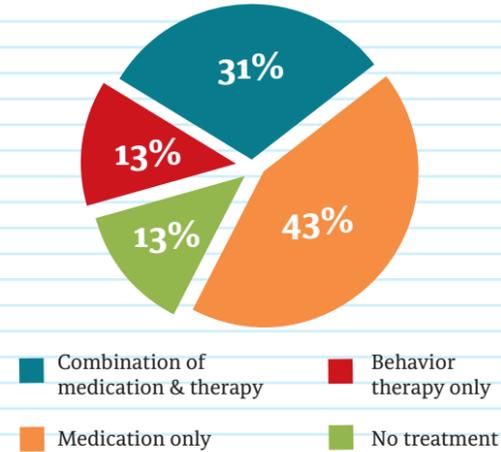


Some patients experience good results with methylphenidate; others prefer amphetamine. The best choice hinges on an individual's biochemistry; even family members can have different preferences.

For 15-20% of people with ADHD, stimulants do not work. For these patients, trying a nonstimulant is the next step.

If stimulants do work for you, dosage is the next step.

How Kids in the U.S. Manage ADHD



2 Nonstimulants: what to try next

3 Signs Your Dosage or Medication Needs Adjustment

- 1 Experiencing side effects such as sleep problems, loss of appetite, headache, or stomachache
- 2 Diminishing symptom control over time as a patient grows and experiences hormonal changes
- 3 Feeling "revved up" or "slowed down"

3 Finding the Right Dosage

How Long Will the Medication Last?



Many ADHD medications carry an XR or ER suffix, which signifies an extended-release formulation designed to gradually release medicine into the blood stream over 10 - 24 hours. Others specify a duration of 3 -4, 6-8, or 8-10 hours, meaning a second daily dose may be needed. The only way to determine an individual's optimal formulation and dosing schedule is through careful experimentation, observation, and tracking.

Atomoxetine (brand name: Strattera) was the first nonstimulant approved by the FDA to treat ADHD in individuals 7 years or older. Researchers believe it boosts norepinephrine in the brain, increasing attention and reducing impulsivity.

Clonidine ER (brand name: Kapvay) and Guanfacine ER (Intuniv) are also commonly prescribed to adults and children 6 and older who experience inattention, impulsivity, and poor working memory.

Dosage is not based on gender, age, or severity of impairment but on the rate at which the medication is metabolized and how efficiently it is absorbed by the body. Start at the lowest dosage and slowly increase it until the benefits are optimized without side effects. This is a trial-and-error process.