



PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Dexmethylphenidate

This information from Lexicomp® explains what you need to know about this medication, including what it's used for, how to take it, its side effects, and when to call your healthcare provider.

Brand Names: US

Focalin; Focalin XR

Warning

- This drug has a risk of abuse and misuse. Give this drug only as you were told by the doctor. Tell the doctor if your child has ever abused or been addicted to any drugs or alcohol.

What is this drug used for?

- It is used to treat attention deficit problems with hyperactivity.
- It may be given to your child for other reasons. Talk with the doctor.

What do I need to tell the doctor BEFORE my child takes this drug?

- If your child has an allergy to this drug or any part of this drug.

- If your child is allergic to any drugs like this one or any other drugs, foods, or other substances. Tell the doctor about the allergy and what signs your child had, like rash; hives; itching; shortness of breath; wheezing; cough; swelling of face, lips, tongue, or throat; or any other signs.
- If your child or a family member has any of these health problems: Blood vessel disease, high blood pressure, heart structure problems or other heart problems, or Tourette's syndrome or tics.
- If your child has any of these health problems: Glaucoma; nervous, anxious, or tense state; or overactive thyroid.
- If your child has ever had a stroke.
- If your child has taken certain drugs for depression or certain other health problems in the last 14 days. This includes isocarboxazid, phenelzine, or tranylcypromine. Very high blood pressure may happen.
- If your child is taking any of these drugs: Linezolid or methylene blue.

This is not a list of all drugs or health problems that interact with this drug.

Tell the doctor and pharmacist about all of your child's drugs (prescription or OTC, natural products, vitamins) and health problems. You must check to make sure that it is safe for your child to take this drug with all of his/her drugs and health problems. Do not start, stop, or change the dose of any drug

your child takes without checking with the doctor.

What are some things I need to know or do while my child takes this drug?

- Tell all of your child's health care providers that your child is taking this drug. This includes your child's doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and dentists.
- Have your child avoid tasks or actions that call for alertness until you see how this drug affects your child. These are things like riding a bike, playing sports, or using items such as scissors, lawnmowers, electric scooters, toy cars, or motorized vehicles.
- If your child has been taking this drug for a long time or at high doses, it may not work as well and your child may need higher doses to get the same effect. This is known as tolerance. Call the doctor if this drug stops working well. Do not give more than ordered.
- Your child may have some heart tests before starting this drug. Talk with your child's doctor.
- This drug may raise the chance of seizures in some people, including people who have had seizures in the past. Talk to the doctor to see if your child has a greater chance of seizures while taking this drug.
- This drug may cause high blood pressure.
- Have your child's blood pressure and heart rate checked often. Talk with your child's doctor.

- If your child is taking this drug and has high blood pressure, talk with the doctor before giving OTC products that may raise blood pressure. These include cough or cold drugs, diet pills, stimulants, ibuprofen or like products, and some natural products or aids.
- Limit your child's use of caffeine (for example, tea, coffee, cola) and chocolate. Use with this drug may cause nervousness, shakiness, and a fast heartbeat.
- Alcohol may interact with this drug. Be sure your child does not drink alcohol.
- This drug may affect growth in children and teens in some cases. They may need regular growth checks. Talk with the doctor.

If your child is pregnant or breast-feeding a baby:

- Talk with the doctor if your child is pregnant, becomes pregnant, or is breast-feeding a baby. You will need to talk about the benefits and risks to your child and the baby.

What are some side effects that I need to call my child's doctor about right away?

WARNING/CAUTION: Even though it may be rare, some people may have very bad and sometimes deadly side effects when taking a drug. Tell your child's doctor or get medical help right away if your child has any of the following signs or symptoms that may be related to a very bad side effect:

- Signs of an allergic reaction, like rash; hives; itching; red,

swollen, blistered, or peeling skin with or without fever; wheezing; tightness in the chest or throat; trouble breathing, swallowing, or talking; unusual hoarseness; or swelling of the mouth, face, lips, tongue, or throat.

- Signs of high blood pressure like very bad headache or dizziness, passing out, or change in eyesight.
- Signs of liver problems like dark urine, feeling tired, not hungry, upset stomach or stomach pain, light-colored stools, throwing up, or yellow skin or eyes.
- Joint pain.
- Purple patches on the skin or mouth.
- Change in eyesight.
- Seizures.
- Shakiness.
- Trouble controlling body movements.
- Sweating a lot.
- Restlessness.
- Change in color of hands or feet from pale to blue or red.
- Numbness, pain, tingling, or cold feeling of the hands or feet.
- Any sores or wounds on the fingers or toes.
- Not able to pass urine or change in how much urine is passed.

- Muscle pain or weakness.
- Call your child's doctor right away if your child gets a painful erection (hard penis) or gets an erection that lasts for longer than 4 hours. If this is not treated right away, it may lead to lasting sex problems and your child may not be able to have sex in the future.
- Sudden deaths have happened with this drug in children with some heart problems or heart defects. Stroke, heart attack, and sudden death have also happened in adults taking this drug. Call your child's doctor right away if your child has a fast, slow, or abnormal heartbeat; weakness on 1 side of the body; trouble speaking or thinking; change in balance; drooping on 1 side of the face; change in eyesight; chest pain or pressure; shortness of breath; or severe dizziness or passing out.
- New or worse behavior and mood changes like change in thinking, anger, and hallucinations have happened with this drug. Tell the doctor if your child or a family member has any mental or mood problems like low mood (depression) or bipolar illness, or if a family member has killed themselves. Call the doctor right away if your child has hallucinations; change in the way your child acts; or signs of mood changes like low mood (depression), thoughts of killing him/herself, nervousness, emotional ups and downs, thinking that is not normal, anxiety, or lack of interest in life.
- A severe and sometimes deadly problem called serotonin

syndrome may happen if your child takes this drug with certain other drugs. Call your child's doctor right away if your child has agitation; change in balance; confusion; hallucinations; fever; fast or abnormal heartbeat; flushing; muscle twitching or stiffness; seizures; shivering or shaking; sweating a lot; severe diarrhea, upset stomach, or throwing up; or severe headache.

- Rarely, low blood cell counts have happened with this drug. Call your child's doctor right away if your child has any unexplained bruising or bleeding; signs of infection like fever, chills, or sore throat; or feels very tired or weak.

If your child is or may be sexually active:

- Change in sex interest.

What are some other side effects of this drug?

All drugs may cause side effects. However, many people have no side effects or only have minor side effects. Call your child's doctor or get medical help if any of these side effects or any other side effects bother your child or do not go away:

- Dizziness.
- Feeling sleepy.
- Feeling nervous and excitable.
- Headache.
- Stomach pain or heartburn.
- Upset stomach or throwing up.

- Dry mouth.
- Weight loss.
- Not hungry.
- Trouble sleeping.
- Throat pain.

These are not all of the side effects that may occur. If you have questions about side effects, call your child's doctor. Call your child's doctor for medical advice about side effects.

You may report side effects to your national health agency.

How is this drug best given?

Give this drug as ordered by your child's doctor. Read all information given to you. Follow all instructions closely.

All products:

- Give this drug with or without food.

Extended-release capsules:

- If taken with food, this drug may take longer to work.
- Give early in the day to help prevent sleep problems.
- Have your child swallow whole. Do not let your child chew or crush.
- If your child cannot swallow this drug whole, you may sprinkle the contents on applesauce. If you do this, have your child swallow the mixture right away without chewing.

What do I do if my child misses a dose?

- Skip the missed dose and go back to your child's normal time.
- Do not give 2 doses at the same time or extra doses.

How do I store and/or throw out this drug?

- Store at room temperature.
- Protect from light.
- Store in a dry place. Do not store in a bathroom.
- Keep all drugs in a safe place. Keep all drugs out of the reach of children and pets.
- Throw away unused or expired drugs. Do not flush down a toilet or pour down a drain unless you are told to do so. Check with your pharmacist if you have questions about the best way to throw out drugs. There may be drug take-back programs in your area.

General drug facts

- If your child's symptoms or health problems do not get better or if they become worse, call your child's doctor.
- Do not share your child's drug with others and do not give anyone else's drug to your child.
- Keep a list of all your child's drugs (prescription, natural products, vitamins, OTC) with you. Give this list to your child's doctor.

- Talk with your child's doctor before giving your child any new drug, including prescription or OTC, natural products, or vitamins.
- Some drugs may have another patient information leaflet. If you have any questions about this drug, please talk with your child's doctor, nurse, pharmacist, or other health care provider.
- If you think there has been an overdose, call your poison control center or get medical care right away. Be ready to tell or show what was taken, how much, and when it happened.

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This information should not be used to decide whether or not to take this medicine or any other medicine. Only the healthcare provider has the knowledge and training to decide which medicines are right for a specific patient. This information does not endorse any medicine as safe, effective, or approved for treating any patient or health condition. This is only a brief summary of general information about this medicine. It does NOT include all information about the possible uses, directions, warnings, precautions, interactions, adverse effects, or risks that may apply to this medicine. This information is not specific medical advice and does not replace information you receive from the healthcare provider. You must talk with the healthcare provider for complete information about the risks and benefits of using this medicine.

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If you have any questions, contact a member of your healthcare team directly. If you're a patient at MSK and you need to reach a provider after 5:00 PM, during the weekend, or on a holiday, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit www.mskcc.org/pe to search our virtual library.

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