PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Atomoxetine

This information from UpToDate® Lexidrug™ 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

Atoncy; Strattera [DSC]

Brand Names: Canada

APO-Atomoxetine; AURO-Atomoxetine; JAMP-Atomoxetine; PMS-Atomoxetine; PRO-Atomoxetine; RIVA-Atomoxetine; SANDOZ Atomoxetine; Strattera [DSC]; TEVA-Atomoxetine

Warning

- In some studies, this drug raised the risk of suicidal thoughts or actions in children and teenagers. All people who take this drug need to be watched closely. Call the doctor right away if signs like depression, nervousness, restlessness, grouchiness, aggression, panic attacks, or other changes in mood, behavior, or actions are new or worse. Call the doctor right away if any thoughts or actions of suicide occur.

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 is allergic to this drug; any part of this drug; or any other drugs, foods, or substances. Tell the doctor about the allergy and what signs your child had.
- If your child has any of these health problems: Glaucoma, heart disease, or high blood pressure.
- If your child has ever had an adrenal gland tumor called pheochromocytoma.
- 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 to give this drug with all of your child's other 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.
- Your child may need to have some heart tests before starting this drug. If you have questions, talk with your child's doctor.

- Have your child's blood pressure and heart rate checked often.
- 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, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) like ibuprofen or naproxen, and some natural products or aids.
- If you have been told that your child is a slow metabolizer of some drugs, talk with the doctor.
- If you get this drug in the eyes, flush right away with cool water and get medical help.
- Wash any surface that comes into contact with this drug as soon as possible.
- If your child has bipolar disorder, manic episodes may happen while taking this drug. Call the doctor if your child has signs of a manic episode.
- Rarely, liver problems have happened. Sometimes, this was severe and a liver transplant was needed. If you have questions, talk with the doctor.
- This drug may affect growth in children and teens in some cases. They may need regular growth checks. Talk with the doctor.
- If the patient is a child, use this drug with care. The risk of some side effects may be higher in children.

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.

Capsules:

- If you touch a broken capsule, or the drug inside the capsule, wash the area with soap and water.

Oral solution:

- Avoid touching this drug. If you touch this drug, wash the area with soap and water.

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 liver problems like dark urine, tiredness, decreased appetite, upset stomach or stomach pain, light-colored stools, throwing up, or yellow skin or eyes.
- Signs of high blood pressure like very bad headache or dizziness, passing out, or change in eyesight.
- A fast heartbeat.
- Hallucinations (seeing or hearing things that are not there).
- Trouble passing urine.
- 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 in people with some heart problems or heart defects. Tell the doctor if your child has any heart problem or defect. Tell the doctor if a family member has an abnormal heartbeat or died suddenly. Get medical help right away if your child has any signs of heart problems like chest pain, abnormal heartbeat, or severe dizziness or passing out.

If your child is or may be sexually active:

- Sex problems may happen with this drug. This includes lowered interest in sex, trouble having an orgasm, ejaculation problems, or trouble getting or keeping an erection. If you have any questions, talk with the doctor.

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:

- Headache.
- Trouble sleeping.
- Weight loss.
- Constipation, stomach pain, upset stomach, throwing up, or decreased appetite.
- Dry mouth.
- Feeling dizzy, sleepy, tired, or weak.

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:

- Keep giving this drug to your child as you have been told by your child's doctor or other health care provider, even if your child feels well.

- Give this drug with or without food.

Capsules:

- Have your child swallow whole. Do not let your child chew, open, break, or crush.

Oral solution:

- This drug comes with an oral syringe and an adapter. Do not use any other oral syringe or adapter. Do not take the adapter out after it has been put in. If this drug does not come with an oral syringe or an adapter, call your pharmacist.
- Have your child sit upright to take a dose.

What do I do if my child misses a dose?

- Give a missed dose as soon as you think about it on the same day your child missed the dose.
- If it is close to the time for your child's next 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?

All products:

- Store at room temperature 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.

Oral solution:

- After opening, throw away any part not used after 45 days.

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.
- 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.

Consumer Information Use and Disclaimer

This generalized information is a limited summary of diagnosis, treatment, and/or medication information. It is not meant to be comprehensive and should be used as a tool to help the user understand and/or assess potential diagnostic and treatment options. It does NOT include all information about conditions, treatments, medications, side effects, or risks that may apply to a specific patient. It is not intended to be medical advice or a substitute for the medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment of a health care provider based on the health care provider's examination and assessment of a patient's specific and unique circumstances. Patients must speak with a health care provider for complete information about their health, medical questions, and treatment options, including any risks or benefits regarding use of medications. This information does not endorse any treatments or medications as safe, effective, or approved for treating a specific patient. UpToDate, Inc. and its affiliates disclaim any warranty or liability relating to this information or the use thereof. The use of this information is governed by the Terms of Use, available at https://www.wolterskluwer.com/en/know/clinical-effectiveness-terms.

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If you have questions or concerns, contact your healthcare provider. A member of your care team will answer Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Outside those hours, you can leave a message or talk with another MSK provider. There is always a doctor or nurse on call. If you're not sure how to reach your healthcare provider, call 212-639-2000.

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

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