

Latest Guidance on Methylphenidate

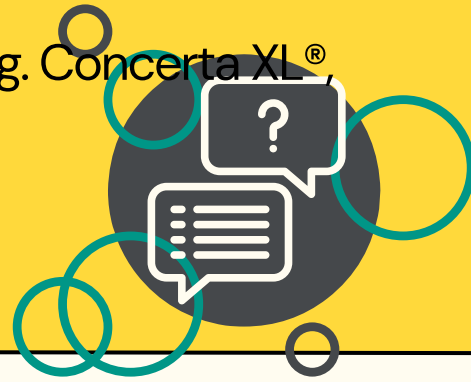
The MHRA has recently issued guidance about switching brands of methylphenidate.

What is methylphenidate?

Methylphenidate is used for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

It is available in the UK in immediate-release and long-acting formulations taken by mouth as either tablets or capsules.

Long-acting methylphenidate may be prescribed as e.g. Concerta XL[®], Medikinet XL[®], Equasym XL[®], Ritalin LA[®].



Long-acting brands

All long-acting methylphenidate preparations include an immediate-release part as well as a modified-release part.

This means methylphenidate is released in two phases.

This allows for a rapid onset of action and a slower extended release, avoiding the need to take further doses during the day.



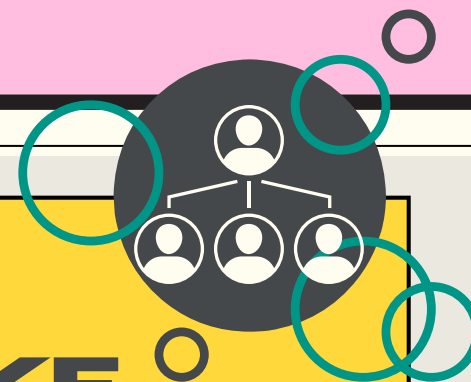
Differences between long-acting brands

The way methylphenidate is released from different long-acting brands is not the same and there are differences in the time it takes for the methylphenidate to be released. So transferring to another brand can cause changes in how a young person's symptoms are managed.

The response to methylphenidate varies greatly from person to person so the doctor will need to increase or decrease the dose to find one that suits the individual. Methylphenidate preparations differ from each other in several ways, including:

- the time it takes to release the methylphenidate and
- whether they are affected by food and drink

Due to these differences, changing brands means that the dose may have to be adjusted to avoid the potential for overdose or underdose.



ACTIONS FOR MANAGERS TO TAKE

- 1 Brief your staff to ensure they are aware of the signs to look out for if the brand of methylphenidate is changed e.g.
 - any worsening of ADHD symptoms
 - any side effects of the medicine
 - if the young person is unable to take the medicine as prescribed
 - any concerns you have about the wellbeing of the young person
- 2 Ensure your staff monitor any young person whose methylphenidate brand has been changed and report back to you any concerns
- 3 Contact the prescriber if you have any concerns about any young person's medicines
- 4 Ensure your staff are fully trained on Controlled Drugs and how to handle them.

ACTIONS FOR STAFF TO TAKE

- 1 If you notice a young person has been prescribed a different brand of methylphenidate to usual, tell your line manager.
- 2 If a young person has had the brand changed, monitor the young person and report any symptoms and side effects to your line manager.
- 3 Make sure your medicines training is up to date, including the administration of Controlled Drugs
- 4 Make sure you have an in-date competency assessment.

ANY QUESTIONS?

Contact the OPUS Pharmacist Support Team on pharmacist@opuspharmserve.com or call 0333 939 0053