



The Use of Psychostimulant Medication: Tips for Parents



The Facts

- Stimulant medications are defined as controlled substances under federal and state regulations. The possession of stimulant medication without a prescription is against the law.
- Money does not need to be exchanged for a gift or another exchange of a controlled substance to be considered a “sale.”
- Appropriate treatment of ADHD does **not** increase the risk of developing a substance use disorder in the future. In fact, the latest evidence is that effective treatment of ADHD, including stimulant medication, actually **reduces** that risk.

Help Your Teen Be Responsible With Medication

- Treat your teen as an active participant in the treatment process.
 - Talk about best medication doses, times, and delivery systems available.
 - Include your teen in any medication discussions with the pediatrician.
- Keep medications in a safe, locked, and monitored location.
- Parents must monitor their teen’s self-administration of medication.
- Parents *must* maintain knowledge of the appropriate dose, timing, and weekend and summer need for the medication and be aware of their teen’s readiness to take on the responsibility of self-administration in a mature manner.
- Parents must monitor medication use of teens with ADHD, as some teens decide on their own to stop taking their prescribed medications because of embarrassment, a desire to be like their peers who do not take medication, or denial that they have ADHD.
- Return of some or all of the original behavioral issues or attentional problems might indicate a need to consider a dosage change but also might signal that the teen has quietly stopped taking his medication.

If Your Teen Wishes to Stop Medication

- If your teen wishes to stop taking the prescribed medication,
 - State from the beginning—and make sure she understands before stopping the medication—that she should first have a discussion with the pediatrician. Include the pediatrician as a mediator in the process.
 - If, after talking with the pediatrician, it is decided to begin a medication-free trial, you must set up a clear definition of what behaviors would lead to restarting medication.

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When Looking for a Job

- If your teen is on medication and going for a job interview, tell him that he should privately tell the interviewer right away that he takes prescription medication that might show up on a drug test. If the medication shows up on a test and he hasn't told the employer or tries to tell the employer at the time of the test, the employer is not likely to accept the information and it can cost your teen the job.
- State and federal laws prevent employers from discriminating against someone taking prescription medication, so tell your teen that he should not be afraid to tell the truth.
- You should also seek a note from the teen's doctor supporting this.

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The recommendations in this resource do not indicate an exclusive course of treatment or serve as a standard of medical care. Variations, taking into account individual circumstances, may be appropriate. Original resource included as part of *Caring for Children With ADHD: A Practical Resource Toolkit for Clinicians*, 3rd Edition.

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