

Medicin mod ADHD, engelsk

For parents and young people

Information about

MEDICATION TO TREAT ADHD

For children and young people



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This brochure is about medication to treat ADHD. It is intended for parents of children and young people with ADHD being treated in Region Midtjylland. Young people with ADHD can also benefit from reading this brochure.

The brochure describes what ADHD is and how ADHD can be treated with medication.

We hope this brochure will help you and your relatives to learn more about ADHD.

Kind regards
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WHAT IS ADHD?

ADHD is one of the most common mental difficulties among children and young people. Some people grow out of it, but most also have ADHD as adults. Therefore, ADHD is a disorder that a lot of people have to learn to live with.

Fortunately, much can be done to have a good life with ADHD. You can get support and help to learn to understand the disorder so that family life can be arranged in the best possible way. You can also take medication to help reduce the symptoms of ADHD.

The symptoms

The most frequent symptoms of ADHD are found in three areas: attention deficit, impulsiveness and hyperactivity.

It is important to emphasise that not all children and young people with ADHD have the same symptoms. While some mainly struggle with concentration, others may be very hyperactive and impulsive.

The symptoms in an individual child can also change over time. Because symptoms differ greatly, lots of different types of support and help are needed.

SYMPTOMS OF ADHD

Attention deficit

- ➔ Problems concentrating
- ➔ Forgetfulness
- ➔ Being easily distracted
- ➔ Confused
- ➔ Fluctuating energy levels
- ➔ Feeling out of sorts

Impulsiveness

- ➔ Pushy
- ➔ Impatient
- ➔ Interrupting other people
- ➔ Quick
- ➔ Superficial
- ➔ Excitement-seeking

Hyperactivity

- ➔ Restless
- ➔ Fidgety
- ➔ Hectic
- ➔ Fiddling with things
- ➔ Difficulty sitting still for long

HOW TO TREAT ADHD

ADHD can be treated with therapy and medication. The child's psychiatrist will determine which treatment is appropriate for the child and the family.

Psychoeducation

As a rule, therapy is provided as psychoeducation – i.e. education about ADHD. It is about giving the child, the parents and any other network an understanding of what it means to have ADHD.

It is essential for the parents, especially, to know about ADHD. It is important for them to know about the disorder and to know what help and support could make everyday life easier for their child.

Avoid stress

Generally speaking, children and young people with ADHD become stressed more easily. Therefore, treatment of ADHD is very much about reducing the risk of stress.

Where do you get help and treatment?

- ❑ Medical treatment is given at the hospital.
- ❑ Therapeutic treatment takes place at the hospital or is facilitated by the municipality.
- ❑ The municipality and the child's school/place of education can often also help with various kinds of support and assistance, e.g. a named contact, support teacher scheme, etc.

Schoolteachers, too, may need to know about ADHD so they will be better equipped to create frameworks that take account of the child. For example, many children find it useful to have small breaks, opportunities to move around, and help to remember important messages.

Psychotherapy

Some children and young people with ADHD may be so affected by their difficulties that personal psychotherapeutic counselling could help them feel better.



MEDICATION TO TREAT ADHD

Medication to treat ADHD is one of the most effective ways of reducing ADHD symptoms. Today, there are many different drugs available for treating ADHD. There are major differences when it comes to which medication will suit an individual child best.

It can take time to identify the medication that works best and has the fewest side-effects. But it is important for the child, the parents and the health care provider to spend time identifying the best medication. The child may benefit from it for many years to come – perhaps for life.

Medication to treat ADHD is available for children, young people and adults.

Did you know...?

Everybody is different and we all tolerate medication differently. With that in mind, it might take some time to find the medication that suits your son or daughter best.

A number of studies have shown, however, that medication does not have as much effect on small children. That is why, as a rule, medication is not advised for pre-schoolers (age 0–6).

Medication is not enough, however.

Medication is generally very effective for ADHD; however, medication is not enough. It is important for you, your child and the rest of your family to receive other support, e.g. psychoeducation, where you can learn more about what it means to have ADHD.

STARTING MEDICATION

Medication will be initiated in consultation with a doctor specialising in psychiatry. If the doctor thinks medication may help your child, you and the doctor will agree to treatment using medication.

Initial consultation

Before your child starts taking medication, the health care provider (a nurse or doctor) will check his/her blood pressure and pulse, and measure weight and height. An electrocardiogram (ECG) may also be necessary. It does not take very long and is painless.

The health care provider will let you know what medication your child is to have and will give you a timetable for slowly increasing the dose. It is important to stick to the timetable, as gradually increasing the dose helps to reduce the risk of side-effects.

Control

After a brief period, usually 2–4 weeks, you will see the health care provider for a check-up. Your child's pulse, blood pressure, weight and height will be checked, and you can tell the doctor how your child is getting on with the medication. Has it had a good effect on your son or daughter? Or have there been any side-effects?

If the medication has not worked as intended, you and the health care provider can jointly decide to increase the dose or try a different kind of medication. To-

Why measure height and weight?

Very rarely, ADHD medication can affect a child's growth in height, so as an adult he/she would be a little shorter than otherwise. The risk is very slight. To ensure normal growth, the doctor will track the child's height and weight regularly. If the doctor finds that growth is being affected, treatment will cease immediately.

Why take pulse and blood pressure readings?

ADHD medication can affect blood pressure and pulse in some cases. This is normally insignificant. Some people experience periods when their heart is pounding, but this is generally not at all dangerous.

gether, you will plan how the medication is to be administered during the upcoming period and make another appointment for a check-up.

What happens next

Together, you and the health care provider will identify the medication that suits your child best. You will prepare a timetable for administering the medication. The check-ups will continue until the effect of the medication is stable.

TYPES OF MEDICATION

Medication to treat ADHD can be divided into two main categories: types of medication that stimulate the central

nervous system (CNS), and CNS non-stimulant types of medication.

What happens in the brain?

The ability to pay attention (cognitive function) is impaired in a person with ADHD. The neurotransmitters dopamine and noradrenaline are particularly important for the cognitive function. Most types of medication to treat ADHD boost the amount of dopamine and noradrenaline in specific areas of the brain.

CENTRAL NERVOUS SYSTEM STIMULANT MEDICATION

One advantage of central nervous system stimulants is their very rapid effect.

The effect is noticeable just 30–60 minutes after the person takes the medication. Some types of medication are effective for 3–4 hours, while other, slow-release types are effective for longer, up to as much as 13–14 hours.

The difference lies in how rapidly the medication is assimilated. For that reason, the same medication may be effective for longer in some children, while others might not get such a long-lasting effect. Some people will therefore have to take medication several times a day to get the right help, while others can manage with a single dose.

Many children with ADHD only take their medication in the morning, before they go to school. Later – in the evening when they are at home and have more freedom – they do not need medication.

Side-effects

Typical side-effects can be impaired appetite and sometimes nausea. These are often transitory and disappear after a few days or weeks of taking the medication.

A person with a tendency to have tics may sometimes find more tics occurring, and more pronounced tics. Conversely, the tics may be reduced when the person begins treatment.

Blood pressure and pulse may increase slightly, but that is usually

not significant. The child's health care provider will keep an eye on blood pressure and pulse.

Medication can occasionally cause sadness and anxiety in the child. Speak to the health care provider if this does not pass quickly. Consider switching to a different drug.

Other side-effects are rare, but it is important to get in touch with the health care provider if you suspect any new distress may be a side-effect of the medication.

How to take the medication

Both central nervous system stimulants and CNS non-stimulant medication are available in tablet and capsule form, and in some instances in liquid form. Some capsules can be opened for the contents to be sprinkled onto food or liquid.

CNS NON-STIMULANT MEDICATION

An advantage of CNS non-stimulant medication is that the effect of the medication does not depend on what time of day it is taken. In other words, you can make do with taking your medication once daily – and it will work for 24 hours.

On the other hand, CNS non-stimulants are not nearly as fast-acting as central nervous system stimulants. In fact, it can take 2–3 months for the effect of the medication to kick in. However, many people notice it starting to work after a few weeks.

Side-effects

The usual side-effects of CNS non-stimulant medication are the impact on blood pressure and pulse, as well as reduced appetite and sometimes slight nausea. There is no risk of aggravating tics.

Most side-effects are transitory, but it is always important to get in touch with your doctor or nurse if you suspect side-effects or feel unwell after taking the medication.



ADHD AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Some of the medication used to treat ADHD can be abused if taken in much higher doses than prescribed by the doctor. Because the medication is open to abuse, the authorities check very carefully how much is prescribed to an individual patient. It is important for you as parents to store the medication responsibly until your child is old enough to administer it himself/herself.

Some parents fear that medication to treat ADHD may subsequently make their child dependent on alcohol or drugs. There are no indications to support this. In fact, numerous

ADHD and alcohol

- ADHD medication can interact with alcohol in some cases.
- Young people who take medication to treat ADHD should therefore be extra cautious about drinking alcohol.

studies show that treating ADHD with medication can help reduce the risk of going on to abuse drugs or alcohol at a later stage.

HOW LONG

DO YOU HAVE TO BE ON MEDICATION?

Many people may need life-long medication, but some “grow out of” ADHD symptoms and do not require medication in adulthood.

You can always stop the medication if you are unsure whether it is having the desired effect – or if you think you no longer need it. It is a good idea to talk to your doctor before you stop treatment, though.



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Where can you find **MORE INFORMATION** ?

➤ **psykinfomidt.dk**

Here you will also be able to find articles on
psychiatric diagnoses in different languages

➤ **min.medicin.dk**

➤ **ADHD.dk**

ADHD association website

Scan the QR code to access more facts about
ADHD in children and young people,
useful links, videos, books, etc.





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