



Official reprint from UpToDate®

www.uptodate.com ©2018 UpToDate, Inc. and/or its affiliates. All Rights Reserved.

Wolters Kluwer

The content on the UpToDate website is not intended nor recommended as a substitute for medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Always seek the advice of your own physician or other qualified health care professional regarding any medical questions or conditions. The use of UpToDate content is governed by the [UpToDate Terms of Use](#). ©2018 UpToDate, Inc. All rights reserved.

Methylphenidate: Patient drug information

Copyright 1978-2018 Lexicomp, Inc. All rights reserved.

(For additional information [see "Methylphenidate: Drug information"](#) and [see "Methylphenidate: Pediatric drug information"](#))

Brand Names: US Aptensio XR; Concerta; Cotempla XR-ODT; Daytrana; Metadate CD [DSC]; Metadate ER; Methylin; QuilliChew ER; Quillivant XR; Relexxii; Ritalin; Ritalin LA; Ritalin SR [DSC]

Brand Names: Canada Biphentin; Concerta; Foquest; Ritalin; Ritalin SR

Warning

- This drug may be habit-forming. Use this drug as you were told by your doctor. Tell your doctor if you have a history of drug or alcohol abuse. Misuse of this drug may cause it to not work as well. Mood or behavior changes may also happen.
- Tell your doctor if you have ever had drug abuse, alcohol abuse, or mental or mood problems.

What is this drug used for?

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

What do I need to tell my doctor BEFORE I take this drug?

All products:

- If you have an allergy to methylphenidate or any other part of this drug.
- If you are allergic to any drugs like this one, any other drugs, foods, or other substances. Tell your doctor about the allergy and what signs you had, like rash; hives; itching; shortness of breath; wheezing; cough; swelling of face, lips, tongue, or throat; or any other signs.
- If you have any of these health problems: Glaucoma; nervous, anxious, or tense state; or overactive thyroid.

- If you or a family member have 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 you have ever had any of these health problems: Drug abuse or stroke.
- If you have taken certain drugs used for low mood (depression) like isocarboxazid, phenelzine, or tranylcypromine or drugs used for Parkinson's disease like selegiline or rasagiline in the last 14 days. Taking this drug within 14 days of those drugs can cause very bad high blood pressure.
- If you are taking any of these drugs: Linezolid or methylene blue.

All chewable products:

- If you have trouble swallowing, talk with your doctor.

Long-acting tablets:

- If you cannot swallow this product whole.
- If you have ever had any of these health problems: Cystic fibrosis; narrowing of the GI (gastrointestinal) tract or other GI problems like bowel block, small bowel disease, short gut syndrome, or slow-moving swallowing tube (esophagus) or bowel tract; peritonitis.

Oral-disintegrating tablet:

- If you are taking any of these drugs: Famotidine, omeprazole, or sodium bicarbonate.

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

Tell your doctor and pharmacist about all of your drugs (prescription or OTC, natural products, vitamins) and health problems. You must check to make sure that it is safe for you to take this drug with all of your drugs and health problems. Do not start, stop, or change the dose of any drug without checking with your doctor.

What are some things I need to know or do while I take this drug?

All products:

- Tell all of your health care providers that you take this drug. This includes your doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and dentists.
- Avoid driving and doing other tasks or actions that call for you to be alert until you see how this drug affects you.
- Heart attacks, strokes, and sudden deaths have happened in adults taking this drug. Sudden deaths have also happened in children with very bad heart problems or heart defects. Call your doctor right away if you have a change in strength on 1 side that is greater than the other, 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 very bad dizziness or passing out.
- You may have some heart tests before starting this drug. Talk with your doctor.
- Check blood pressure and heart rate as the doctor has told you. Talk with the doctor.
- This drug may raise the chance of seizures in some people, including people who have had seizures in the past. Talk to your doctor to see if you have a greater chance of seizures while taking this drug.
- Avoid drinking alcohol while taking this drug.
- A very bad and sometimes deadly health problem called serotonin syndrome may happen if you take this drug with drugs for depression, migraines, or certain other drugs. Call your doctor right away if you have agitation; change in balance; confusion; hallucinations; fever; fast or abnormal heartbeat; flushing; muscle

twitching or stiffness; seizures; shivering or shaking; sweating a lot; very bad diarrhea, upset stomach, or throwing up; or very bad headache.

- Call your doctor right away if you have 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.
- This drug may affect growth in children and teens in some cases. They may need regular growth checks. Talk with the doctor.
- Tell your doctor if you are pregnant or plan on getting pregnant. You will need to talk about the benefits and risks of using this drug while you are pregnant.
- Tell your doctor if you are breast-feeding. You will need to talk about any risks to your baby.

All chewable products:

- If you have phenylketonuria (PKU), talk with your doctor. Some products have phenylalanine.

Long-acting tablets:

- For some brands, you may see the tablet shell in your stool. For these brands, this is normal and not a cause for concern. If you have questions, talk with your doctor.
- Tell your doctor that you use this drug if you are getting x-rays near the belly.

Skin patch:

- Avoid use of heat sources (such as sunlamps, tanning beds, heating pads, electric blankets, heat lamps, saunas, hot tubs, heated waterbeds). Avoid long, hot baths or sunbathing. Your temperature may rise and cause too much drug to pass into your body.
- This drug may lead to loss of skin color at or around where the patch is put on. Sometimes, this has happened at other areas. This may last even after this drug is stopped. The chance may be higher if you or someone in your family has ever had a skin problem called vitiligo. Talk with the doctor.
- This drug may cause harm if chewed or swallowed. If this drug has been put in the mouth, call a doctor or poison control center right away.

What are some side effects that I need to call my 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 doctor or get medical help right away if you have any of the following signs or symptoms that may be related to a very bad side effect:

All products:

- 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 or low blood pressure like very bad headache or dizziness, passing out, change in eyesight.
- Joint pain.
- Purple patches on the skin or mouth.
- Blurred eyesight.
- Fast or slow heartbeat.
- A heartbeat that does not feel normal.
- Very upset stomach or throwing up.
- Seizures.

- Fever or chills.
- Sore throat.
- Shakiness.
- Trouble controlling body movements.
- Sweating a lot.
- Feeling very tired or weak.
- 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.
- Change in sex interest.
- Call your doctor right away if you have a painful erection (hard penis) or an erection that lasts for longer than 4 hours. This may happen even when you are not having sex. If this is not treated right away, it may lead to lasting sex problems and you may not be able to have sex.
- New or worse behavior and mood changes like change in thinking, anger, and hallucinations have happened with this drug. Tell your doctor if you or a family member have any mental or mood problems like low mood (depression) or bipolar illness, or if a family member has killed themselves. Call your doctor right away if you have hallucinations; change in the way you act; or signs of mood changes like low mood (depression), thoughts of killing yourself, nervousness, emotional ups and downs, thinking that is not normal, anxiety, or lack of interest in life.

Skin patch:

- Change in skin color.
- Very bad skin irritation.

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 doctor or get medical help if any of these side effects or any other side effects bother you or do not go away:

All products:

- Dizziness.
- Feeling sleepy.
- Dry mouth.
- Headache.
- Upset stomach or throwing up.
- Weight loss.
- Feeling nervous and excitable.
- Not hungry.
- Not able to sleep.

- Belly pain or heartburn.

Skin patch:

- Skin irritation.

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

You may report side effects to your national health agency.

How is this drug best taken?

Use this drug as ordered by your doctor. Read all information given to you. Follow all instructions closely.

Tablets:

- Take 30 to 45 minutes before meals.
- If taking this drug more than 1 time a day, take the last dose of the day before 6 PM.

All chewable products:

- Chew well before swallowing.
- Take with a full glass of water.

Fast-release chewable tablet:

- Take 30 to 45 minutes before meals.
- If taking this drug more than 1 time a day, take the last dose of the day before 6 PM.

Extended-release chewable tablet:

- Take in the morning.
- Take with or without food.
- Some products may be broken in half. If you are not sure if you can break this product in half, talk with the doctor.

Oral-disintegrating tablet:

- Take in the morning.
- Take with or without food but take the same way each time. Always take with food or always take on an empty stomach.
- Do not push the tablet out of the foil when opening. Use dry hands to take it from the foil. Place on your tongue and let it melt. Water is not needed. Do not swallow it whole. Do not chew, break, or crush it.
- Do not take this drug out of the blister pack until you are ready to take it. Take this drug right away after opening the blister pack. Do not store the removed drug for future use.

All liquid products:

- Measure liquid doses carefully. Use the measuring device that comes with this drug. If there is none, ask the pharmacist for a device to measure this drug.

Liquid (solution):

- Take 30 to 45 minutes before meals.
- If taking this drug more than 1 time a day, take the last dose of the day before 6 PM.

Liquid (suspension):

- Take in the morning with or without food. Shake bottle for 10 seconds or more before taking.

- Check to make sure the drug in the bottle is a liquid. If this drug is still a powder, do not use it. Take it back to the pharmacist.

Long-acting capsules (Jornay PM):

- Take in the evening.
- Do not take this drug in the morning.
- Take with or without food but take the same way each time. Always take with food or always take on an empty stomach.
- You may sprinkle contents of capsule on applesauce. Do not chew.
- After mixing, take your dose right away. Do not store for future use.

All other long-acting capsules and tablets:

- Take in the morning.
- Some drugs may need to be taken with food or on an empty stomach. For some drugs it does not matter. Check with your pharmacist about how to take this drug.
- Swallow whole. Do not chew, break, or crush.

Long-acting capsules:

- You may sprinkle contents of capsule on applesauce. Do not chew. Swallow right away and follow with water or juice.
- After mixing, take your dose right away. Do not store for future use.

Skin patch:

- Follow how to use as you have been told by the doctor or read the package insert.
- Do not use patches that are cut or do not look right.
- Wash your hands before and after use.
- Put patch on clean, dry, healthy skin on the hip. Do not put the patch on the waistline.
- Do not put on cuts, scrapes, eczema, or damaged skin.
- Put patch on in the morning and take off 9 hours later or as you have been told by the doctor.
- Put the patch in a new area each time you change the patch.
- Water from bathing, swimming, or showering can make the patch not stick well or fall off. If the patch falls off, do not touch the sticky side with your fingers.
- If the patch falls off, put on a new one on some other part of the same hip. Take the new patch off at the normal time.

All products:

- To gain the most benefit, do not miss doses.
- If you have been taking this drug for a long time or at high doses, it may not work as well and you may need higher doses to get the same effect. This is known as tolerance. Call your doctor if this drug stops working well. Do not take more than ordered.
- Do not switch between different forms of this drug without first talking with the doctor.
- Limit your use of caffeine (for example, tea, coffee, cola) and chocolate. Use with this drug may cause nervousness, shakiness, and a fast heartbeat.
- Have your blood work checked if you are on this drug for a long time. Talk with your doctor.
- If you are taking this drug and have high blood pressure, talk with your doctor before using 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.

What do I do if I miss a dose?

Liquid (suspension):

- Call your doctor to find out what to do.

Long-acting capsules (Jornay PM):

- Take a missed dose as soon as you think about it if you remember on the same evening you missed the dose.
- If you do not think about the missed dose until the next morning, skip the missed dose and go back to the normal evening time.
- Do not take 2 doses at the same time or extra doses.

All other oral products:

- Use a missed dose as soon as you think about it. Do not take this drug after 6 PM.
- If it is close to the time for your next dose, skip the missed dose and go back to your normal time.
- Do not take 2 doses at the same time or extra doses.

Skin patch:

- You may apply the patch later in the day. Then take off the patch at your normal time of day.
- Do not put on 2 doses at the same time or extra doses.

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

All oral products:

- Store at room temperature.

Oral-disintegrating tablet:

- After taking blister packs out of the carton, store in the plastic travel case that comes with this drug.

Liquid (suspension):

- Throw away any part not used after 4 months.
- Store upright with the cap on.

Skin patch:

- Store at room temperature. Do not refrigerate or freeze.
- Keep patches in the pouch. Use within 2 months of opening tray.
- After you take off a skin patch, be sure to fold the sticky sides of the patch to each other.

All products:

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

Use of UpToDate is subject to the [Subscription and License Agreement](#).

Topic 11797 Version 193.0