

# METHYLPHENIDATE

**Other names:** Ritalin<sup>®</sup>, Ritalin SR<sup>®</sup>, Ritalin LA<sup>®</sup>, Rubifen<sup>®</sup>  
Rubifen SR<sup>®</sup>, Concerta<sup>®</sup>



**Important note:** The following information is intended to add to, not replace, the knowledge and judgment of your doctor, pharmacist or other health care professional.

## Why you are taking this medicine?

Methylphenidate is a stimulant drug which is used to treat narcolepsy (uncontrollable sleepiness) or to treat attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) in children. Methylphenidate works best in ADHD patients as part of an overall treatment plan which includes psychological, social and educational measures.

Methylphenidate increases the amount of a natural chemical in the brain, called dopamine. Dopamine is responsible for self-control and attention span in the brain. By increasing dopamine helps to improve ADHD and narcolepsy.

## When to take this medicine

- Methylphenidate should be taken exactly as your doctor directs. To avoid keeping you awake, take the last dose of the day before 6 pm at night.
- The sustained release tablets (SR) or extended release tablets (Concerta), should be swallowed whole. Do not break, crush or chew them.
- If the modified release capsules (Ritalin LA) can not be swallowed whole, sprinkle the capsule contents over a small amount of soft cold food (e.g. yoghurt or banana) and swallow without chewing.
- Do not halve the Rubifen brand of tablets.

Some brands of methylphenidate are immediate release tablets, which last for a shorter time, while some brands have been made to release medicine over a longer period of time. Always make sure you have been given the right brand of methylphenidate.

If you are taking Concerta and an empty tablet shell appears in your stools, do not be alarmed as it is a common occurrence.

## If you miss a dose

Take the dose as soon as possible except when it is close to the time for your next dose. If it is almost time for the next dose, skip the missed dose and return to your regular dosing schedule. You should not take two doses at the same time.

## Who should not take methylphenidate?

You should not take methylphenidate if you suffer from any of the following:

- anxiety, agitation
- hyperthyroidism
- cardiac arrhythmias (irregular heart beat) or severe angina pectoris
- glaucoma

- patients with motor tics (muscle twitching), or with a family history or diagnosis of Tourette's syndrome

## Side effects

Unfortunately as well as having good effects, most medicines have some effects on your body that are unwanted. These are called *side effects*.

Call your doctor or speak to your pharmacist **immediately** if you have any of these side effects:

- visual disturbances e.g. blurred vision
- heart palpitations (racing heartbeat), chest pain or tightness for greater than 15 minutes
- skin rash, itching or fever
- unusual body movements or twitching or tremors
- lightheadedness, fainting
- confusion
- mood or mental changes or unusual behaviour

Tell your doctor or pharmacist if you have these side effects:

- headache
- dry mouth
- nervousness or restlessness
- lack of appetite (usually short term)
- trouble sleeping

Methylphenidate may make you drowsy or dizzy. It is important to make sure you know how your body reacts before you drive a car, operate machinery or ride a bike.

The list of side effects is not complete. Tell your doctor or pharmacist if any of these side effects are of a concern to you.

## Other medicines

Tell your doctor or pharmacist if you are taking any other medicines, including herbal or complementary medicines or those available to buy without a prescription.

Methylphenidate should be used cautiously in patients taking:

- warfarin
- anticonvulsants such as phenobarbitone, phenytoin or primidone
- antidepressants/antipsychotics (check with your doctor or pharmacist)

The side effects of methylphenidate may be increased by alcohol. It is advisable to limit alcohol intake while receiving methylphenidate.

## Storage

Keep all medicines out of the reach of children.

**Read this leaflet and discuss any questions you have about your medicines with your doctor or pharmacist.**