

PRESCRIPTION STIMULANTS



WHAT IS A PRESCRIPTION STIMULANT?

A prescription stimulant is a medication prescribed to treat conditions such as asthma, obesity, narcolepsy and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Common prescription stimulants include **Ritalin**, **Concerta**, **Dexedrine**, and **Adderall**, and most are taken orally by tablet, capsule, or liquid.

Under proper medical supervision, the chances of misuse, addiction, harmful side effects and overdose are significantly lessened.



EFFECTS ON THE BRAIN

When taken as prescribed, prescription stimulants can help with focus, alertness, and energy by increasing the activity of dopamine and norepinephrine in the brain.

MISUSE, ADDICTION, AND OVERDOSE

Misuse is taking medication in a way it was not intended or prescribed, taking someone else's medication, and/or using medication only for its effects (a high).

Misusing prescription stimulants can lead to negative side effects, primarily **psychosis**, **anger**, and **paranoia**.

"STUDY DRUGS"

RX stimulants are often misused as "**study drugs**" to enhance academic performance. However, students who abuse stimulants actually have lower GPAs in high school and college than their non-using peers.¹

Diversion is when a legally prescribed drug is "diverted" into the possession of someone else for non-medical use.²



1 IN 5 COLLEGE STUDENTS abuse prescription stimulants at least once in their lifetime³

9.9% of college students recently misused Adderall

2.4% of college students recently misused Ritalin⁴

57% of students received the drugs from a friend

10% of students received the drugs from a family member

6% of students received the drugs from a "dealer"³



USE ABUSE IMPACT

SHORT-TERM EFFECTS

- Feelings of euphoria
- Increased blood pressure and heart rate
- Increased breathing
- Decreased blood flow

EFFECTS AT HIGH DOSES

- Increased blood sugar
- High body temperature
- Irregular heartbeat
- Heart failure
- Seizures

WORD ON THE STREET

Common slang for prescription stimulants:

- Speed
- Uppers
- Vitamin R
- Black Beauties
- Co-Pilots
- Pep Pills
- Skippy
- Ups





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WHAT TO LOOK FOR: SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF STIMULANT ABUSE

BEHAVIORAL SIGNS include deceptive behavior, such as lying or stealing, “doctor shopping” to get multiple prescriptions, exhibiting excess energy or motivation, and aggression.

PHYSICAL SIGNS include changes in appetite, twitching and jitteriness, elevated heartbeat and blood pressure, weight and hair loss, and sweating and skin problems.

COGNITIVE SIGNS include confusion and paranoia, enhanced sensory awareness, hallucinations and delusion, racing thoughts, hyperfocus, flight of ideas, and poor judgement and decision-making.

PSYCHOSOCIAL SIGNS include anxiety, depression, mood swings, anger and aggression, and increased confidence. ⁵

DEVELOPING ADDICTION

Misuse can lead to **addiction**, which is the continued use of a substance despite the harm it causes. Addiction can cause many issues, including health problems, disability, and failure to meet responsibilities at home, school, or work. ^{6,7}

SYMPTOMS OF WITHDRAWAL

- Irregular problems in controlling movement
- Increased appetite
- Sleep problems
- Depression
- Fatigue



OVERDOSE

An **overdose** occurs when a person uses enough of the drug to produce a life-threatening reaction or death.

An overdose may include many symptoms such as **heart problems, nerve problems and seizures, abnormally high or low blood pressure, circulation failure, stomach issues, convulsions, coma, and fatal poisoning.** ⁶

TREATMENT AND HOW TO HELP

- Talk to your doctor to be evaluated and find treatment that is right for you
- If you suspect an overdose, immediately dial 911



ADDERALL AND ESPORTS

A developing trend, **Electronic Sports (eSports)** is a form of online video game competitions often with organized teams who participate to win money or other prizes. Due to the need for focus, quick reflexes, and energy for long hours of play, some competitors have turned to abusing stimulants, or **Performance Enhancing Drugs (PEDs)**, like Adderall.

Because it is a developing problem, no data is available about the abuse of PEDs in eSports. Currently, there is no independent regulation, though most prize-driven tournaments now require a drug test. The World Anti-Doping Agency has banned amphetamines (Adderall) and methylphenidates (Ritalin, Concerta) in competitive gaming sports. ⁸