

Lisdexamfetamine (say: lis-decks-am-feta-mean) for parents and carers

What is lisdexamfetamine used for?

- Lisdexamfetamine (also called LDX, Elvanse® or Vyvanse®) is used to help treat the symptoms of ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder), more so in people who have not done well with methylphenidate
- It is made as capsules.

☞ For ADHD, about 2 in 3 (70%) of people's symptoms improve with lisdexamfetamine

☞ If LDX does not work or has too many side effects, a switch to methylphenidate means about half of those people improve (total of about 85%, or 6 in 7 people). There are other options after that e.g. medicines and therapies.

What is the usual dose of lisdexamfetamine?

- The usual dose is up to 70mg a day
- The average dose in children is around 40-50mg a day.

How should my child take lisdexamfetamine?

- Swallow the capsules whole with at least half a glass of water whilst sitting or standing, so they do not stick in your throat
- The capsule contents can be taken with water or orange, or on yoghurt. Add the contents to a glass of water, stir the liquid until fully dissolved and then drink straight away (any residue on the glass doesn't contain any lisdexamfetamine)
- It can be taken with or without food.

When should my child take lisdexamfetamine?

- Lisdexamfetamine should be in the morning, and not in the afternoon or later.

What are the alternatives?

- There are other medicines (e.g. methylphenidate, guanfacine and atomoxetine), talking therapies and treatments for ADHD.

☞ See our "Handy chart" for ADHD to help you compare the medicines available and how long to take them

☞ This will help you talk to your prescriber, nurse, pharmacist or other healthcare professional.

How long will lisdexamfetamine take to work?

- It should start to work within 1-2 hours of a dose
- The effect will then build over the next few weeks

How long will my child need to keep taking lisdexamfetamine for?

- It should be reviewed at least once a year by your specialist – how you feel on days when you don't have a dose is very helpful.

Is lisdexamfetamine addictive and can my child stop taking it suddenly?

- Lisdexamfetamine is a stimulant medicine
- At smaller doses, it can be stopped suddenly
- At higher doses, it is possible that 'withdrawal' effects might be seen. These would include extreme tiredness, becoming even more hyperactive, eating more and depression
- When the time comes, your child should come off it by a gradual drop in the dose over several weeks
- It normally works out better if stopping it in a planned way at a time when stress levels are lower, rather than around exams or life events
- Discuss this with your prescriber, nurse or pharmacist

See our handy fact sheet on 'Coming off Medicines'

There is no evidence that taking lisdexamfetamine will cause someone to take illicit drugs when they are older. In fact the opposite appears to be true because children will not try to self-medicate with illicit drugs to help their symptoms.

What should I do if my child forgets to take a dose of lisdexamfetamine at the right time?

- Give it as soon as you remember within about 2-3 hours of when it was due
- **BUT** do not give a dose any later than about lunchtime or it may be much more difficult to get to sleep
- Do not try to catch up by giving two or more doses at once as your child may get more side-effects.

If your child has problems remembering doses (as many people do) ask to see our Handy Fact Sheet "Remembering to take your medicines".

Can my child drink alcohol while taking it?

- There should be no extra problems with lisdexamfetamine and small amounts of alcohol.

Will it affect my child's other medication?

The main interactions with lisdexamfetamine include:

- The effect of lisdexamfetamine can be decreased a little by ascorbic acid (vitamin C), diets high in acidic fruits, and infections
- There is no problem with the 'Contraceptive Pill'
- Make sure any doctor or pharmacist who treats your child knows they take lisdexamfetamine.

You **must** also see the Patient Information Leaflet (PIL) for the full possible list. Some of these medicines can still be used together but you will need to follow your prescriber's instructions carefully.

Will my child need any blood or other tests if taking lisdexamfetamine?

- Your child should not need any blood tests
- They might need a heart check before starting lisdexamfetamine and checks on weight, height and blood pressure at least every six months
- If your child has any blood tests, make sure they know he/she takes this as lisdexamfetamine can lead to odd results in some tests.

What about getting pregnant?

- Discuss this with your health professional - there are leaflets that can help give you the

information you need to make a choice

- Usually, people gradually reduce their dose before trying to get pregnant
- If you find yourself pregnant unexpectedly see your health professional as soon as possible.

Can my child drive, cycle or operate a boat while taking lisdexamfetamine?

- Your child may feel a bit dizzy at first
- If your child cycles or is old enough to drive, wait until they are settled on a dose before cycling, driving or operating machines.

Lisdexamfetamine can help you concentrate and you may be less likely to have an accident but **only** if you take it regularly. (for more details go to www.gov.uk/adhd-and-driving).

In the UK it is legal to drive as long as you take lisdexamfetamine as prescribed by a prescriber and you are sure that it **does not** affect your driving.

What sort of side-effects might my child get if taking lisdexamfetamine?

This table shows some of the most common side effects and any you might need to take action on. You **must** also see the maker's Patient Information Leaflet for the full list of possible side effects but do not be worried by this. Some people get no side effects at all. Some side effects are the brain getting used to a medicine and these usually wear off in a few days or weeks. Starting at a lower dose will help. If you think your child might have a side effect to this medicine, you should ask your prescriber, pharmacist or health professional.

Side effect	What happens	What to do about it
VERY COMMON (<i>more than about 1 in 10 people might get these</i>)		
Loss of appetite	Loss of weight, not feeling hungry	If this is a problem, contact your prescriber, dietician or pharmacist for advice. It can wear off after a few weeks. You can use some high calorie drink and food products to help if this begins to get a worry.
Insomnia	Not being able to fall asleep at night	Discuss this with your prescriber. He or she may be able to change the time of the dose or doses. Make sure the dose is in the morning. Some people find melatonin helps.
Headache	Your child's head is pounding and painful	Try paracetamol. Your pharmacist will be able to advise if this is safe to take with any other medicines your child may be taking.
COMMON (<i>fewer than about 1 in 10 people might get these</i>)		
Abdominal pain, nausea and vomiting	Feeling sick and being sick. Stomach pain.	If it is bad, contact your prescriber. It may be possible to adjust the dose. Taking it after food may help. It may wear off after a few weeks. This gets less common as your child gets older.
Dry mouth	Dry mouth	More common in adults. Try sucking boiled sweets.
Dizziness	Feeling light-headed and faint	Do not stand up too quickly. Your child should try and lie down when feeling this coming on. Do not drive (if old enough) or cycle.
Nervousness	Feeling more anxious or nervous	This should wear off. If not, mention it to your prescriber next time you meet.
Tachycardia	Fast heart beat	This usually wears off but can mean the dose is a bit too high so ask your prescriber. This gets a bit common as your child gets older.
Tell your prescriber if your child gets this side effect		
Change in mood	Being aggressive, depressed, hostile and perhaps suicidal thinking.	It is more likely to occur after starting, a dose increase, or overdose. See your Prescriber straight away if you have thoughts of harming yourself.

The small print: This leaflet is to help you understand more about lisdexamfetamine. You **must** also read the manufacturer's Patient Information Leaflet (PIL). You may find more on the internet but beware as internet-based information is not always accurate. Do not share medicines with anyone else. The 'Handy charts' will help you compare the main medicines for each condition, how they work and their side effects. Go to our website for fuller answers to these and many other questions.

V07.13 [SRB 11-2025; review by 02-2026] ©2025 Mistura™ Enterprise Ltd (www.choiceandmedication.org). Choice and Medication™ indemnity applies only to subscribing organisations and the personal use by that organisation's service users and carers, using the latest version.

Use by non-subscribing healthcare professionals, organisations or individuals is prohibited.