

Trust Headquarters Redesmere
Countess of Chester Health Park
Liverpool Road
Chester
CH2 1BQ

Telephone: 01244 397380

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Advice on the current supply issues with ADHD medications

Background

On 27 September, a [National Patient Safety Alert](#) was issued to advise of national shortages of Methylphenidate prolonged-release capsules and tablets, Lisdexamfetamine capsules, and Guanfacine prolonged-release tablets. There have also been supply problems reported with Atomoxetine. At present, the supply disruptions are expected to resolve at various dates between October and December 2023.

Initial actions for primary care

- Identify those likely to be affected using prescription data from the last three months.
- Contact the service user and establish if they have enough medication to last until the expected resolution date (N.B. this is unlikely due to the majority of the medications being affected are schedule two controlled drugs, which should not routinely be prescribed for more than 30 days at a time).
- For any service users identified who are being prescribed the medication by the specialist CAMHs, LD or ADHD adult service, please direct them to their relevant team.

For service users identified who are being prescribed medication by their GP under a shared care agreement, please see the guidance below regarding individual medications which has been produced to try and advise colleagues in primary care of the actions that could be considered to support service users who are affected by the supply problems.

Atomoxetine and Lisdexamfetamine

- If the service user does not feel that they can manage having a break in medication, then refer to the specialist CAMHs, LD or ADHD adult service for advice.

Guanfacine

- There are no alternatives to guanfacine preparations and advice should be sought from the specialist CAMHs, LD or ADHD adult service.
- If two or more consecutive doses of guanfacine are missed, then there is a risk of re-bounce hypertension and tachycardia. Therefore, wherever possible, dose should be gradually tapered down by 1mg every 4-7 days.
- If it is not possible to reduce slowly, monitor BP and pulse rate on stopping. The hypotensive effect of guanfacine may take 2-4 days to resolve. Rebound hypertension may occur and has been reported to persist in some cases. Monitor BP and pulse rate at day 2 after stopping, and again at day 4. If BP is raised at day 4, measure again at weekly intervals until normal. Service user should be told to see medical advice if there are signs of significant rebound hypertension.

Non-pharmacological advice and recommendations

- Eat a Healthy Diet - While diet does not cause ADHD, it does have an effect on mood, energy levels, and symptoms. Set regular snack and mealtimes. Add more omega-three fatty acids to your diet and make sure you are getting enough zinc, iron, and magnesium. For further help: <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/>
- Get Plenty of Sleep. Regular quality sleep can lead to a vast improvement in the symptoms of ADHD. Simple changes to daytime habits go a long way toward resting well at night. Have a set bedtime and stick to it. Avoid using screens (phones, tablets, etc.) before bedtime. For further help: <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/sleep-and-tiredness/how-to-get-to-sleep/>
- Mindfulness/Meditation - The benefits of mindfulness and meditation include enhanced attention control, memory, emotional regulation, coping with stress, and relationships with others; all of which can be areas of challenge for people living with ADHD. People with ADHD may find it helpful to practice mindfulness/meditation online (i.e., <http://www.freemindfulness.org/download>) or through apps (i.e. Headspace, Insight Timer, Calm).
- Exercise Regularly - Exercising is one of the most effective ways to reduce the symptoms of ADHD. Physical activity boosts the brain's dopamine, norepinephrine, and serotonin levels; all of which affect focus and attention.

Specialist ADHD Service Contact Information and Patient Advice Line

A range of short videos providing information on understanding and advice on managing ADHD can be found on the CANDDID website:

<https://www.canddid.nhs.uk/adhd>

The following support services and resources may be useful:

ADHD Foundation	https://adhdfoundation.org.uk/
The National Attention Deficit Disorder Information and Support Service	www.addiss.co.uk
ADHD and you	www.adhdandyou.co.uk
ADD/ADHD Information Online	www.adders.org.uk

If you are experiencing mental ill health issues and need urgent support, please contact your local crisis line detailed below. Each crisis line is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week:

CWP Adult ADHD Team	0300 303 3157
CAMHs Learning Disability – Cheshire East	01625 712043
Wirral CAMHs	0300 303 3157
City of Liverpool, adults aged 18+ contact MerseyCare Crisis Line	0800 145 6570
City of Liverpool, young people aged 16-17 contact Alder Hey Crisis Line	0800 145 5670
Wirral, Cheshire West and Cheshire East All Age contact CWP Crisis Line	0800 145 6485

Yours sincerely,



Fiona Couper
Chief Pharmacist & Associate Director for Medicines Management
CD Accountable Officer