



**North East and
North Cumbria**

**Shortage of medicines for ADHD
(Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder)
Information for patients, families, and carers
October 2023**

There is a worldwide shortage of ADHD medicines because of increased global demand and manufacturing problems. In the NHS we are doing everything we can to address this situation, and to support patients until this problem is resolved. Below we have set out answers to some of the questions you may have about this situation.

Which medicines are affected?

At the moment, some methylphenidate and atomoxetine preparations are affected, and all lisdexamfetamine and all guanfacine preparations are affected. This may change and different strengths and preparations may be affected over the coming weeks.

How long will the shortage last?

Shortages of the various products are expected to resolve at different times between October and the New Year.

Is this affecting all pharmacies?

This is an international shortage affecting all suppliers. Some products remain available, but we do not think there will be enough to cover all shortages of the affected preparations.

What if I cannot get my ADHD prescription?

The first step is to try other pharmacies, as another one may have it in stock. You can use the [find a pharmacy page](#) on the NHS website, www.nhs.uk. Your local pharmacy may also help you to find a supply, and you can ask for your prescription to be made available to other pharmacies.

If you are still unable to get your prescription, please contact your GP or ADHD service for advice. Do not try to substitute other medications yourself as this may be dangerous.

Are there alternatives available?

In most cases, there are alternatives, but they may not be suitable for everyone. Your GP and the ADHD service may be able to advise on alternatives for you, or they may recommend a dose change or short treatment break, and direct you to additional self-help resources.

What if I run out?

Guanfacine must always be stopped slowly as it can cause your blood pressure to increase if stopped suddenly. You may need to use the supplies you have to do this. Consult your GP or ADHD service as soon as possible if you cannot get your prescription from the pharmacy.

Atomoxetine does not usually cause problems if stopped suddenly, but it is always best to ask your GP or ADHD service for guidance if you think you are running out of medication.

Methylphenidate or lisdexamfetamine: for most methylphenidate products there is an equivalent product that can be substituted. Both of these medicines can safely be stopped for a few days, for example over weekends, but it's best to consult your GP or ADHD service for guidance if you think you are running out of medication.

National guidelines recommend having regular treatment breaks from ADHD medications, so it is not unusual to stop taking medication over the weekend or during school holidays.

Please remember...

Our doctors, nurses and pharmacists are doing everything they can to help people through a difficult situation. We know that this may be an upsetting situation, but please be patient and remember that this is a worldwide manufacturing problem and healthcare staff are doing their very best to help.

If you have further questions, please speak with your GP practice or ADHD service.