

How to Decide if an ADD/ADHD Medication is Right For You

There are several medications that are used to treat ADD/ADHD. Finding the right one for you can be frustrating. These steps will help to make the decision easier.

***The comments in blue have been added to give the decision making process an alternative perspective. They are not meant to give medical advice and are the opinions of the author.**

Difficulty Level: easy **Time Required:** 30 minutes

Here's How:

1. Get an accurate diagnosis by a health care professional. **Difficult to do since the research clearly states that there is no accurate medical diagnosis for ADD, only a set of conditions, which hardly makes ADD a disease process.**
2. If the professional making the diagnosis is not an MD, get a referral to an MD or a Psychiatrist who can prescribe medications **This is exactly the issue at hand. We are being forced to get a diagnosis by an qualified prescription writer to treat a disease process that is questionable at best and do so with powerful narcotic psychotropic drugs as the first choice.**
3. Ask the doctor who will be writing the prescription which medications he or she uses to treat ADD/ADHD. **What's the point? The only option is the drug and since all are classified as type 2 narcotics, equivalent to cocaine and speed, which one he chooses is irrelevant.**
4. Give the doctor a complete medical history. Include any chronic health problems, especially heart disease, high blood pressure or mental illness. **This questions are indeed pertinent but if your doctors chooses not to prescribe ADD drugs because of these conditions, then what would he do in there place? Further, if these ADD drugs are contraindicated for the stated conditions then why would they be safe to use in general?**
5. List all other medications you are currently taking. **You will be surprised to know that there has been absolutely NO research done testing the interactions of ADD drugs with any other medications. You had better choose an extraordinary doctor for this task.**
6. Tell the doctor if you have a history of substance abuse or alcoholism. **Very good point. ADD drugs are narcotics, and as such they are addictive. If you have a tendency toward addiction, you want no part of these drugs.**
7. Ask the doctor which medication would be right for you. Ask him or her to explain why he would chose that medication. **You might want to check out the affiliations the doctor might have with the makers of the medication he chooses or with the sales representative. I would like to hear this answer as well !**
8. Ask how many patients the doctor has that use this medication. **Great question but has absolutely no bearing on your case. If the doctor evaluates potential ADD children as his living, I would think that he has quite a few children on that particular medication; that certainly doesn't offer clinical evidence of efficacy.**
9. Ask about possible side effects or reactions. **Good advice, then check it our yourself even if only with an internet search. For your information, a Google search yields over 200,000 websites addressing the side effects of Ritalin alone.**
10. Ask your doctor to check and see if your HMO or other insurance will cover this medication. If not, ask for alternatives. **If the drug is important enough to be specifically prescribed by a trained doctor and is vital to the mental well being of the child, then whether your insurance covers it or not should not be the deciding factor. However, if the advise is to ask for alternatives, then just skip the \$200 average cost for the narcotic drug and seek out the alternative nutraceutical preparations that average under \$50 and have the same effect.**

11. Take the prescription directly to the pharmacy. Do not pass go. Do not collect \$200. Isn't that what sheep do....don't think.....just do?
12. Take the medication home and store it in a safe place away from children. Good advice...keep all DANGEROUS drugs away from children. You may need to put it in a locked cabinet, especially if your spouse or others in your home have a history of substance abuse. Did you know that Ritalin is the drug of choice for junkies in England? It's easy to get, relatively inexpensive as compared to the street price for narcotics and give the same "high" as other illegal narcotics. Take as directed.
13. Note any discomfort or unpleasant reactions, such as headache, upset stomach, sleep problems, change in behaviors or anything else. Report these to your doctor if they persist. Since these are the side effects of all the ADD/ADHD drugs, what will your doctor tell you; stop taking the drug? Come on kids...suck it up!
14. Note any positive effects - improved focus, better anger control, less depressed, etc. I should hope that a narcotic like speed would have an effect on a child. Mellowing out is not necessarily a good thing especially when it also implies dumbing down of the brain.
15. Some medications may take up to 6 weeks before reaching an effective level. Be patient. Most alternative natural approaches have an immediate effect, reach a clinically effective level in days, have no side effects and is not required long term. But then again, you will not hear about this from your MD.