

Clonidine Extended-Release (Kapvay) for ADHD — Patient Information

What is clonidine extended-release?

Clonidine extended-release (brand name: Kapvay) is a medication approved to treat attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). It works by acting on certain receptors in the brain to help improve attention, reduce hyperactivity, and decrease impulsivity. It can be used alone or together with a stimulant medication.

How to take this medication

- Swallow the tablet whole. Do NOT crush, chew, or break it.
- You may take it with or without food.
- This medication is usually taken twice a day — once in the morning and once at bedtime. The bedtime dose should be equal to or larger than the morning dose.
- Your doctor will start you on a low dose (0.1 mg at bedtime) and slowly increase it each week until the right dose is found. The maximum recommended dose is 0.4 mg per day.

If you miss a dose: Skip the missed dose and take your next dose at the regularly scheduled time. Do not take extra medication to make up for a missed dose. Never take more than your prescribed total daily dose in a 24-hour period.

Common side effects

- Drowsiness or sleepiness (most common)
- Tiredness
- Irritability
- Nightmares or trouble sleeping
- Dry mouth

- Constipation
- Decreased appetite
- Dizziness

Drowsiness and tiredness are the most common reasons people stop taking this medication. These side effects are often worst when starting the medication or increasing the dose and may improve over time.

Important safety warnings

Do NOT stop this medication suddenly. Stopping clonidine ER abruptly can cause a dangerous spike in blood pressure (called "rebound hypertension"), which may cause headache, fast heartbeat, nausea, flushing, chest tightness, and anxiety. When it is time to stop, your doctor will slowly lower your dose over several weeks.

Low blood pressure and slow heart rate: This medication can lower blood pressure and slow the heart rate. Tell your doctor if you feel dizzy, lightheaded, or faint, especially when standing up quickly. Stay well hydrated and avoid becoming overheated.

Drowsiness: Be careful when driving, riding a bike, or using machinery until you know how this medication affects you. Avoid alcohol, as it can make drowsiness worse.

Tell your doctor if you are taking any of these medications

- Antidepressants (especially tricyclic antidepressants like amitriptyline or nortriptyline)
 - Blood pressure medications
 - Heart medications (beta-blockers, calcium channel blockers, digoxin)
 - Sleep aids, sedatives, or anti-anxiety medications
 - Any medication that causes drowsiness
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When to call your doctor or seek medical attention

- Fainting or feeling like you might faint

- Very slow heartbeat or feeling that your heart is beating irregularly
 - Severe dizziness or lightheadedness
 - Signs of an allergic reaction: rash, hives, swelling of the face or throat, difficulty breathing
 - If you accidentally take too much medication
 - If you run out of medication and cannot get a refill (do not go without doses)
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Storage

Store at room temperature, away from moisture and heat. Keep out of reach of children.

Remember

- Take your medication every day as prescribed.
- Keep all follow-up appointments so your doctor can check your blood pressure, heart rate, and how well the medication is working.
- Never share this medication with anyone else.
- If you have questions or concerns, contact your doctor or pharmacist.