

# Focalin (Dexmethylphenidate) Immediate-Release — Patient Information Handout

## What is Focalin?

Focalin (dexmethylphenidate) is a prescription stimulant medication used to treat Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). It works by helping to improve focus, attention, and impulse control.

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## How to Take Focalin

- Take Focalin by mouth **twice daily**, with doses at least **4 hours apart** (for example, morning and early afternoon).
  - It can be taken **with or without food**.
  - Do **not** take more than your prescribed dose. The maximum daily dose is 20 mg (10 mg twice daily).
  - If you miss a dose, take it as soon as you remember — but skip it if it is close to the time of your next dose. Do not double up.
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## Common Side Effects

These side effects are usually mild and may improve over time:

- Decreased appetite or weight loss
  - Stomach pain or nausea
  - Headache
  - Trouble sleeping (insomnia)
  - Dry mouth
  - Feeling anxious or restless
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## **Serious Side Effects — Contact Your Doctor Right Away If You Experience:**

- **Heart-related symptoms:** Chest pain, shortness of breath, fainting, or a fast or irregular heartbeat.
  - **Mental health changes:** New or worsening anxiety, agitation, hallucinations (seeing or hearing things that are not there), paranoia, or mood swings.
  - **Circulation problems in fingers or toes:** Numbness, pain, skin color changes (pale, blue, or red), sensitivity to cold, or unexplained wounds on fingers or toes.
  - **Prolonged or painful erection (priapism):** Seek emergency medical attention immediately.
  - **Signs of an allergic reaction:** Rash, hives, swelling of the face, lips, tongue, or throat, or difficulty breathing.
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## **Important Safety Information**

- **Do not take Focalin if you:**
  - Are allergic to methylphenidate or any ingredient in Focalin.
  - Are taking or have taken a monoamine oxidase inhibitor (MAOI) within the last 14 days.
- **Tell your doctor before starting Focalin if you have:**
  - Heart problems, high blood pressure, or a family history of sudden death or heart rhythm problems.
  - A history of mental health conditions such as psychosis, bipolar disorder, or depression.
  - A history of tics or Tourette's syndrome.
  - Glaucoma or eye problems.
  - A history of drug or alcohol abuse.

- **Blood pressure and heart rate** may increase while taking this medication. Your doctor will monitor these at your visits.
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## **Drug Interactions**

Tell your doctor about all medications you take, especially:

- MAO inhibitors (e.g., selegiline, phenelzine, tranylcypromine) — these must **NOT** be taken with Focalin.
  - Blood pressure medications — Focalin may make them less effective.
  - Risperidone — the combination may increase the risk of movement-related side effects.
  - If you are scheduled for surgery, tell your surgeon and anesthesiologist that you take Focalin.
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## **Storage and Safety**

- Store Focalin in a **secure, locked location** to prevent misuse or theft.
  - Do **not** share this medication with anyone else — it is a controlled substance and sharing it is illegal.
  - Dispose of any unused medication properly. Ask your pharmacist about safe disposal options.
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## **When to Call Your Doctor**

Contact your healthcare provider if:

- Your symptoms are not improving after one month of treatment.
- You experience side effects that bother you or do not go away.
- You notice any of the serious side effects listed above.

**In a medical emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room.**