

Ritalin LA (Methylphenidate) Extended-Release Capsules — Patient Information Handout

What is Ritalin LA?

Ritalin LA (methylphenidate hydrochloride extended-release capsules) is a prescription medication used to treat Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). It is a stimulant medication that works by helping to increase attention and decrease impulsiveness and hyperactivity. Ritalin LA is designed to release medication in two phases so that it works throughout the day with just one morning dose.

How to Take Ritalin LA

- Take Ritalin LA **once daily in the morning**, with or without food.
 - Swallow the capsule whole with water or another liquid.
 - If you have trouble swallowing capsules, you may open the capsule and sprinkle the contents onto a spoonful of applesauce. Swallow the applesauce and medicine right away without chewing. Do not save the mixture for later.
 - **Do not crush, chew, or divide** the capsule or its contents — this could release too much medication at once.
 - If you miss a dose, take it as soon as you remember that morning. Do not take it later in the day, as it may cause trouble sleeping. Never take a double dose.
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Common Side Effects

The most common side effects include:

- Decreased appetite or weight loss
- Stomach pain or nausea
- Headache
- Trouble sleeping (insomnia)

- Dry mouth
- Nervousness or anxiety
- Dizziness

These side effects are often mild and may improve over time. Talk to your doctor if any side effect bothers you or does not go away.

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 unusual mood changes
 - **Circulation problems:** numbness, pain, coolness, or color changes (pale, blue, or red) in your fingers or toes
 - **Painful or prolonged erection** (priapism) lasting more than 4 hours — seek emergency help immediately
 - Signs of a severe allergic reaction: rash, hives, swelling of the face/lips/tongue, or difficulty breathing
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Important Warnings

- **Risk of abuse and dependence:** Ritalin LA is a controlled substance (Schedule II). It can be misused or lead to dependence. Take it only as prescribed. Never share your medication with others.
- **Heart risks:** Tell your doctor if you or anyone in your family has a history of heart problems, heart defects, high blood pressure, or sudden death. This medication can raise blood pressure and heart rate.
- **Growth in children:** This medication may slow growth (height and weight) in children. Your child's doctor will monitor growth regularly.

- **Surgery:** If you are scheduled for surgery, tell your surgeon and anesthesiologist that you take this medication. You may need to skip your dose on the day of surgery.
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Before Taking Ritalin LA, Tell Your Doctor If You:

- Have heart problems, high blood pressure, or a family history of sudden death or heart rhythm problems
 - Have a history of mental health problems, including depression, bipolar disorder, or psychosis
 - Have a history of seizures or an abnormal brain wave test (EEG)
 - Have glaucoma or eye problems
 - Have tics or Tourette's syndrome, or a family history of these conditions
 - Are pregnant, planning to become pregnant, or breastfeeding
 - Are taking any other medications, especially MAO inhibitors (such as selegiline, phenelzine, or tranylcypromine), blood pressure medications, blood thinners, or seizure medications
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Drug Interactions to Be Aware Of

- **MAO inhibitors (MAOIs):** Do not take Ritalin LA if you have taken an MAOI within the past 14 days. This combination can cause a dangerous spike in blood pressure.
 - **Blood pressure medications:** Ritalin LA may reduce the effectiveness of blood pressure drugs. Your doctor may need to adjust your dose.
 - **Blood thinners (e.g., warfarin):** Methylphenidate may affect how your body processes blood thinners. Your doctor may need to monitor you more closely.
 - **Seizure medications and certain antidepressants:** Methylphenidate may change how these medications work in your body.
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Storage

- Store at room temperature, away from moisture and heat.
 - Keep in a secure place out of reach of children and others who might misuse it.
 - Do not keep leftover or expired medication. Ask your pharmacist about safe disposal.
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When to Call Your Doctor

Call your doctor if your symptoms are not improving, if side effects are bothersome, or if you have any concerns about your medication. Seek emergency medical help for chest pain, difficulty breathing, fainting, signs of a severe allergic reaction, or a prolonged painful erection.

This handout is for informational purposes and does not replace the advice of your healthcare provider. Always follow your doctor's instructions regarding your medication.