

New National Guidance on ADHD Treatments

ADDISS welcomes the new NICE guidance on ADHD medications. NICE, the independent organisation responsible for providing guidance to the NHS, has reviewed all licensed medications for ADHD and evaluated their use.

ADDISS is pleased that NICE recognise that all children are different and has recommended a range of treatment options for children and adolescents with ADHD.

The medications recommended as treatment options by NICE are:

- Methylphenidate (also known by brand names such as Concerta[®], Equasym[®], Equasym XL[®] and Ritalin[®])
- Dexamphetamine (also known as Dexedrine[®])
- Atomoxetine (also known as Strattera[®])

ADDISS also welcomes the recommendation that the preferences of parent and child are to be taken into account when a decision is made about which treatment is most suitable.

At ADDISS, we believe the decision about treatment is best made between parent, child and specialist healthcare professional. This new guidance should give parents the confidence to openly discuss their child's treatment options with their specialist and play an active role in the decision-making process.

The NICE guidance recommends that once a specialist healthcare professional has decided that a medication treatment for ADHD is appropriate, they should consider five factors when choosing a specific treatment option:

- The presence of co-existing conditions (for example, Tourette's syndrome, epilepsy)
- Any potential side effects
- Specific issues around compliance/ability to take the medication (for example, the problems created by the need to take a mid-day dose at school). These issues should be addressed on an individual basis
- Any potential for drug misuse or diversion (where the medication is forwarded to others for non-prescription uses)
- The preferences of the parents and patient

If, once these five things have been considered, there is still more than one appropriate treatment choice, NICE recommends that the product with the lowest cost is prescribed.

NICE guidance states that **drug treatment should only be initiated by an appropriately qualified healthcare professional with expertise in ADHD** and should be based on a comprehensive assessment and diagnosis. NICE recommend that continued prescribing and monitoring of therapy may be performed by GPs, under shared care arrangements. **ADDISS strongly advise that parents and patients ensure that medication is stabilised and that they are happy with the management of the condition before care is transferred from a specialist.**

If you would like further information, the NICE guidance is available to read or download via the NICE website – www.nice.org.uk