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Strattera, the New ADHD Medication

By Jeannine Virtue

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The newest ADHD medication Strattera (atomoxetine) is expected to hit the pharmacy shelves this month to much ado. What separates Strattera (atomoxetine) from the rest of the ADHD medications pack is that Strattera (atomoxetine) is the first non-stimulant medication FDA-approved for Attention Deficit Disorder.

Strattera (atomoxetine) is not a controlled substance under the Controlled Substance Act, which translates to the convenience of phone-in refills and less prescription hassles at the pharmacy. Strattera (atomoxetine) is an oral capsule prescribed in a once or twice daily dose, which also eliminates the need for school children to medicate during the school day. And, Strattera (atomoxetine) is the only ADHD medication FDA-approved for adults.

But before you knock on your doctor's door asking for a prescription, there are a few things you should know about this new ADHD medication.

Although Strattera (atomoxetine) is a non-stimulant ADHD medication, it still poses many side effects consistent with the side effects of other ADHD medications – and a few new ones that adults might find less than pleasant.

Common Strattera (atomoxetine) Side Effects include (but not limited to):

- _ Problems sleeping/Insomnia
- _ Dry mouth
- _ Decreased appetite
- _ Weight loss
- _ Upset stomach
- _ Constipation
- _ Nausea and/or vomiting
- _ Dizziness
- _ Tiredness
- _ Mood swings
- _ Ear infection
- _ Influenza
- _ Irritability

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Sexual side effects (in adults studied):

- _ Decreased libido
- _ Ejaculatory problems
- _ Impotence
- _ Urination problems
- _ Painful menstrual periods

The following, though rare, have also been reported:

- _ Strattera (atomoxetine) can cause potentially serious allergic reactions.

Strattera (atomoxetine) can increase heart rate and blood pressure. Strattera (atomoxetine) can also worsen the conditions of high blood pressure and heart disease. Strattera (atomoxetine) should not be taken at the same time as, or within two weeks of taking, a monoamine oxidase inhibitor. Patients with narrow angle glaucoma should not take Strattera (atomoxetine).

You should alert the prescribing physician of the following condition before beginning Strattera (atomoxetine);

- _ Current or past depression, psychosis or other mental conditions
- _ Alcohol or drug abuse
- _ Heart disease
- _ High blood pressure
- _ Epilepsy or seizure disorders
- _ Liver disease or kidney disease
- _ Pregnancy, nursing or plans to become pregnant

Strattera (atomoxetine) makers Eli Lilly and Company conducted six placebo–controlled studies in children, adolescents and adults for FDA submission. Early studies suggest that the potential of abuse is lower with Strattera (atomoxetine) and side effects may not be as pronounced as with other ADHD medications.

Two of the trials also tested Strattera's effectiveness against methylphenidate and stated that preliminary evidence indicates comparable effects between atomoxetine (Strattera) and methylphenidate (Ritalin). Researchers did, however, state that larger, double–blind studies are needed to better compare the drugs against each other.

We do expect Strattera (atomoxetine) to become one of the forerunners in ADHD medication, with millions of children on this new drug in a short amount of time. Although Strattera (atomoxetine) sounds like a good choice – as ADHD medications go – the Attention Deficit Disorder Help Center takes a wary position until further testing is completed and analyzed. It is important to note that this new ADHD medication is new, with the tests for effectiveness lasting between six and 10 weeks and the safety of this drug only tested for about one year.

The short–term studies showed that Strattera (atomoxetine) increased the heart rate and blood pressure in children. The long–term effects of increased heart rate and blood pressure are still unknown.

Children fell below their height and weight growth curves on the longer–term study and again, it is still unknown whether this will have an affect on adult height.

Also of concern are the side effects to sexual functioning reported in adult and how that will affect

children whose sexual organs are still developing.

In all fairness, this side effect likely would not surface for Ritalin, Adderall or other ADHD medications since those are for children. Since Strattera (atomoxetine) will also be marketed as an adult prescription, clinical tests were done on adults, which then unearthed sexual side effects.

Our last concern deals with verbiage on the Strattera (atomoxetine) web site. The following is an excerpt from the www.strattera.com FAQ page;

"15. Is there a cure for ADHD?"

Like other chronic disorders, ADHD is not curable. Some patients have a remission of the disease, and may lead productive adolescent and adult lives...."

Eli Lilly and Company knows better and we question why the web site classified Attention Deficit Disorder as a "disease," and one that people "have a remission" from.

Attention Deficit Disorder is NOT a "disease." In fact, Attention Deficit Disorder was not even a "disorder" until 1980 by the American Psychiatric Association classified it as such.

Furthermore, people do not "have a remission" from Attention Deficit Disorder, though many children with Attention Deficit Disorder lead productive adolescent and adult lives.

Jeannine Virtue is a freelance journalist and mother of an Attention Deficit Disorder son. Visit the Attention Deficit Disorder Help Center at www.add-adhd-help-center.com to learn about effective, drug-free alternatives to Ritalin and other ADHD medications.

Concerta: Benefits and Side Effects

By Jeannine Virtue

A number of ADHD medications are hitting the market, joining the old Ritalin standby. Concerta, in its relatively short existence, has already grabbed a sizeable portion of the ADHD medication market share.

Although Concerta offers a number of advantages over the older ADHD medications, it also has several side effects that people with Attention Deficit and parents of Attention Deficit children should be aware of before administering this medication.

Concerta medication for ADHD and ADD is a once-daily treatment and, when introduced, was the first time-release formula. A modified version of Adderall, Adderall XR, followed with a time-released delivery system.

The Concerta capsule has an outer coat of medication that dissolves quickly and then two small compartments of medication inside that release gradually. The time-released system of the Concerta capsule provides up to 12-hour coverage and provides more even coverage for ADHD symptoms but there are a few drawbacks with the capsule form. If not taken early in the morning, manufacturers recommend skipping the dose for that day since the stimulants will affect normal sleep patterns. Some people find that, even with early morning dosing, Concerta significantly disrupts normal sleep

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patterns. Because of the tablet's non-deformable shell, the Concerta pill cannot be cut to decrease the dosage. This aspect causes trouble for people with Attention Deficit still working to find the best dosage levels or for those who wish to give their child a lower dose for half-days at school. Increasing or decreasing by any amount requires a new prescription. Parents cannot crush the tablet and mix with food for children who have difficulty swallowing pills since crushing the Concerta medication will also destroy the release mechanism. The Concerta shell does not completely digest and remnants of the Concerta tablet can often be seen in stools. Although most people's digestive systems can typically pass a wide variety of very interesting articles and does not typically pose a serious health hazard, Concerta is not recommended for people with gastrointestinal narrowing and digestive problems.

Concerta Side Effects:

Concerta side effects seem less pronounced than Ritalin and Dexedrine side effects. Although Concerta side effects are less pronounced than the older medications' side effects, the Concerta medication for ADD and ADHD still pose negative side effects, as do other ADHD medications.

Concerta Side Effects include: abdominal pain aggravation, nervousness, hostility, sadness drug dependence dizziness headache tics insomnia and prolonged sleepiness loss of appetite increased coughing, sinusitis, upper respiratory tract infection vomiting allergic reaction increased blood pressure psychosis (abnormal thinking or hallucinations).

Concerta should not be used by people with marked anxiety or agitation, glaucoma, or tics or during treatment with monoamine oxidase inhibitors.

The stimulant methylphenidate, also used in Ritalin, is the active ingredient in the Concerta medication for ADHD and ADD. The medical community has not yet determined the long-term effects of having methylphenidate in the bloodstream for prolonged hours every day for numbers of years.

In stating the potential for abuse and dependence on this drug, the Concerta manufacturer also instructs people to inform their doctor if their child has ever used or been dependent on alcohol or drugs, or if the child is now using or dependent on alcohol or drugs.

Concerta, along with all other ADHD medications currently on the market, is not recommended for children under the age of six since its safety and effectiveness has not been determined. Despite ADHD drug manufacturer's own labels warning against prescribing these powerful drugs to young children, doctors increasingly prescribe ADD medications to children under the manufacturer recommended age.

Parents should carefully consider the health effects of placing small children on medications for ADD and ADHD, even if the child's health care provider prescribes an medication for ADHD or ADD.

The Concerta medication is about 70 percent effective in decreasing the symptoms of Attention Deficit Disorder, which is about the same level of effectiveness to Ritalin, Adderall and Strattera.

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Although the prevailing ADHD medications have about the same level of effectiveness on the general population, children and adults react differently to the different formulations. Ritalin might produce severe side effects while Concerta side effects might be minimal. Adderall side effects could present themselves differently than Strattera side effects.

People using ADHD medications know that these little pills are never the "cure-all" answer. Attention Deficit requires a multifaceted approach which requires many different tactics and combination of tactics. What works is highly individual, depending on individual needs.

Many people with Attention Deficit Disorder and parents of children with Attention Deficit Disorder find great Attention Deficit Disorder and ADHD success from diet supplementation – especially with amino acids and essential fatty acids – a shift in parenting tactics, modifying the home and school environment, biofeedback, neuro-linguistic programming, stress relief measures and exercise.

The greatest successes are found by being bold and trying a combination of many measures.

Jeannine Virtue is a freelance journalist and mother of an Attention Deficit Disorder son. Visit the Attention Deficit Disorder Help Center at

for effective drug-free

alternatives to Ritalin, Concerta and other ADHD medications.

Concerta: Benefits and Side Effects

Beyond ADHD... The Real Child

The New ADHD Medications

Understanding ADHD

ADHD Beyond The Classroom

Natural Pain Management

Understanding Acne: Causes, Cures and Myths

Proven Pricing Secrets



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