

ADHD MEDICATION · 4.14

Controlled Drug Rules and ADHD Prescriptions: What You Need to Know

ADHD stimulants are controlled drugs in the UK. The rules affect prescribing, dispensing, repeats, supply and travel. Here is the practical patient picture.

FOR

Adults on ADHD stimulant prescriptions

AUDIENCE AGE

All ages

REVIEWED

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PART OF

The NeuroFX resource library

IN SUMMARY

Controlled Drug Rules and ADHD Prescriptions: What You Need to Know

Which ADHD medications are controlled drugs

- **Methylphenidate, lisdexamfetamine and dexamfetamine are Schedule 2.** Concerta XL, Equasym XL, Medikinet XL, Xaggitin XL, Delmosart, Elvanse, Elvanse Adult and the immediate-release brands all fall into this category. The Misuse of Drugs Regulations 2001 set the rules.
- **Atomoxetine and guanfacine are not controlled drugs.** Strattera (atomoxetine) and Intuniv (guanfacine) follow standard prescription rules. Repeats are allowed and the 28-day quantity limit does not apply.
- **The rules exist for a reason and they are not negotiable.** Schedule 2 status reflects the abuse potential of amphetamine and methylphenidate. The rules are set in law, applied at the pharmacy, and shape what your prescriber can and cannot do administratively. They are part of being on these medications long term.

The rules that affect daily life

- **Maximum 28 to 30 days per prescription.** Schedule 2 prescriptions are limited to typically 30 days' supply. Most ADHD prescriptions are written for 28 days. Longer quantities are exceptional and require prescriber justification.
- **No repeat prescriptions on Schedule 2.** Each prescription is written afresh by the prescriber. The tick-box repeat that works for many other medications does not apply. This is why ADHD prescribing creates more administrative work than most other medications.
- **ID required at the pharmacy.** Photo ID (driving licence, passport) is expected on first dispensing, after changing pharmacy, or when collecting for someone else.
- **Prescription valid for 28 days from the date written.** Not from the date dispensed. A prescription written but not collected within 28 days needs to be replaced.
- **Travel needs planning.** Original packaging, hand luggage, a covering letter from your prescriber for international trips, and a Home Office personal licence for trips of three months or more. Different countries have different rules; methylphenidate is more widely accepted than lisdexamfetamine. Check the destination before booking.

How we help

- **Predictable prescribing on the right schedule.** Schedule 2 prescriptions run on a tighter cycle than most medications. NeuroFX issues prescriptions on a predictable rhythm so a repeat is in hand before you run out.
- **Letters for international travel where needed.** We can provide a covering letter stating medication, indication and treatment plan for international travel, and advise on the Home Office personal licence where the trip is long enough to require one.
- **Continuity through pharmacy or supply disruption.** Where a pharmacy cannot dispense or a brand is unavailable, we work through the available alternatives. Prescription decisions remain specialist; we do not leave you stranded.

WHEN TO SPEAK TO A PROFESSIONAL

Speak to your pharmacy first about any prescription-related question. Speak to your GP, your prescriber or NHS 111 if a prescription issue cannot be resolved at the pharmacy. Seek urgent help via 999 or A&E for any acute mental health crisis.

SOURCES

Misuse of Drugs Regulations 2001; BNF; NHSBSA; Home Office

NEXT STEPS**Speak to NeuroFX**

Private ADHD and autism assessment for adults and children aged 6 and upwards.
CQC-registered. Bedford Consulting Rooms, 4 Goldington Road, Bedford MK40 3NF.

neurofx.co.uk · **info@neurofx.co.uk** · **0333 533 3303**