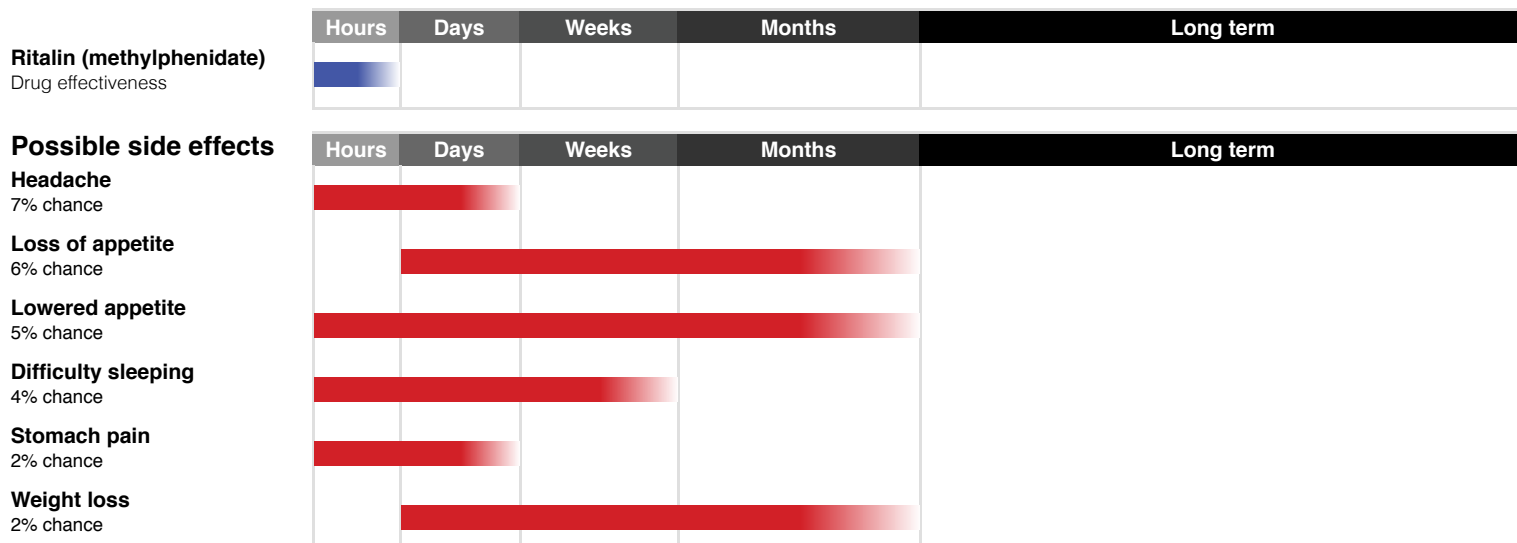


# Ritalin (methylphenidate) basics

**Helps you focus and stay alert.** Ritalin (methylphenidate) is a first-choice treatment for ADHD that comes in many different forms, but you need to take this medication more often than alternatives.

## What to expect when starting

Here's when people typically experience benefits as well as some possible side effects. Your experience may be different.



## Tips from pharmacists

- Take 30 to 45 minutes before meals to avoid low appetite.
- Take the chewable tablet with a full glass of water or other fluid to avoid choking. Chew well before swallowing.
- If you are having trouble sleeping, try taking your last daily dose before 6pm.
- Store Ritalin (methylphenidate) in a locked area to prevent abuse by others.
- Don't take it with alcohol to avoid more severe side effects.
- Ritalin (methylphenidate) is a controlled substance (CII) so you may need to follow up with your doctor as frequently as every month to get a new prescription.

## Risks and warnings

The FDA has identified these as possible serious or life-threatening risks with this medication. Contact your doctor if you experience any of these.

### Abuse and dependence

Ritalin (methylphenidate) has a risk of abuse and dependence. Take only what's prescribed by a doctor to minimize risks of abuse, overdose, and side effects. Misuse of this drug may cause it to not work as well. If you have a history of drug abuse or alcoholism, there are other medications that may be more appropriate for your ADHD.

### Serious or life-threatening heart problems

People using Ritalin (methylphenidate) have a higher risk for heart attack, stroke, and even death in some cases. If you have a history of heart problems or defects you should not use this medicine, and you should be screened for heart problems before starting. Occasionally Ritalin (methylphenidate) can cause unexplained fainting or chest pain that comes on with physical activity. Talk with your doctor about your exercise plan to help avoid these problems.

### Aggressive behavior and psychiatric symptoms

Taking a stimulant like Ritalin (methylphenidate) can bring on or worsen psychiatric symptoms such as hallucinations, delusional thinking, mania, aggressive behavior or hostility. If you have a history of mental illness, or are currently being treated, use this medicine with extreme caution.