

Ritalin®

Other names:

Vitamin R, Jif, R-ball, Skippy

How it is used:

swallowed, crushed and snorted or injected

What it looks like:

white tablets

Ritalin is the trademark name for methylphenidate hydrochloride, or MPH, which was first introduced in the 1940s. It is a mild central nervous system stimulant, and it is primarily prescribed to treat attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Ritalin also has been prescribed for the treatment of narcolepsy.

Although Ritalin is a valuable medicine, it can be abused. Parents may take their children's Ritalin and abuse it or sell it; children may sell their own drugs or give them away to friends; people may steal the drugs from pharmacies and school; or people may attempt to get the same prescription from more than one doctor.

Instead of swallowing Ritalin tablets, some individuals attempt to get a more intense reaction by crushing the pills and either snorting the powder or dissolving and then injecting it as an intravenous solution. Ritalin is safe when used according to a doctor's orders, but if it is abused, injected or snorted, it can cause blood clots, infections, scars, burning of nasal tissues, open sores, circulatory problems, and toxic overdose.

What it Does: Ritalin stimulates the central nervous system and assists some people in concentrating and focusing on tasks. The drug produces a short-term mood elevation and some students abuse it to stay awake to either study or "party" longer. In most people the effects are short-lived and there is often a letdown or "crash" after they wear off. During this "crash" the person can feel very depressed, sleepy, and sluggish.

Stimulant drugs have the potential to induce tolerance; people who abuse Ritalin often find that they need ever increasing doses to get the same effect. As they continually become tolerant to the higher dose there is a greater chance for the person to become addicted.

If you have not been prescribed Ritalin, you should not take it. There have been some instances of death connected to Ritalin abuse. If a doctor has prescribed Ritalin for you, you must follow the proper dosage.

If you have abused the drug and then stop taking it suddenly, you may experience a withdrawal reaction characterized by severe depression and extreme fatigue.

Effects on the mind and body:

- decreased or loss of appetite
- sleep disturbances and insomnia
- increase in blood pressure
- occasional tics
- nausea
- hypersensitivity
- anxiety
- tension
- nervousness

Support groups in Lancaster County:

Alcoholics Anonymous	(717) 394-3238
Narcotics Anonymous	(717) 393-4546
Al-Anon (for family & friends)	(877) 298-5027



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