

Alcohol, recreational drugs and ADHD medication

To help make sure ADHD medication is safe and effective for you, we need to understand any alcohol or recreational drug use before starting treatment. We know these can be sensitive topics. Our aim is not to judge, but to support you safely and make sure any treatment plan is right for you.

Alcohol

Alcohol can affect how you respond to ADHD medication. It may also increase the risk of side effects or affect your physical and mental health.



We recommend avoiding alcohol while taking ADHD medication. However, we also understand that some people may choose to drink small amounts of alcohol. ADHD medication may still be considered if your alcohol intake is within recommended limits.

By the time you start medication, we ask that your alcohol intake is:

- 14 units per week or less, and
- not associated with binge drinking.

We may not be able to start or continue ADHD medication if:

- 1 you drink more than 14 units of alcohol per week.
- 2 your alcohol use is high, for example above 35 units per week for women or 50 units per week for men, or
- 3 there are concerns about alcohol dependence.

In these situations, we may need to pause or stop treatment and recommend appropriate support. You can be referred back once things are more stable.

Recreational drugs

This includes substances such as cannabis, cocaine, MDMA, amphetamines and other non-prescribed drugs.

Recreational drugs can interact with ADHD medication and may increase risks to your physical or mental health. For this reason, it is not safe to use recreational drugs while taking ADHD medication.

At your ADHD assessment, we will ask about any recreational drug use. If you are using recreational drugs, we will ask you to stop before starting medication.

Before treatment begins, we will ask you to confirm that you have stopped using recreational drugs.



We may not be able to proceed with treatment if:

- 1 you are still using recreational drugs when medication titration is due to start, or
- 2 there are concerns about dependence or harmful use.

In these situations, we may need to pause or stop treatment and recommend appropriate support. You can be referred back once the situation has improved.

Why this matters

ADHD medications can affect:

- 1 heart rate and blood pressure
- 2 mood and anxiety
- 3 sleep
- 4 appetite, and
- 5 overall mental wellbeing.



Please speak to us

Please be open with your clinician about any alcohol or recreational drug use. This helps us support you safely and make the best decisions with you.

If you are unsure whether your alcohol or drug use might affect treatment, please let us know. We will talk through the next steps with you in a supportive and non-judgemental way.

To contact your prescriber, please raise a note in your portal for '**Your prescriber**'. Please note that our prescribers work on a 2-3 working day response time.

If you have any other queries, please contact our patient support team via **Live Chat** or by telephone: **0330 124 1980 (Mon-Fri 8am-6pm)**.