

## Atomoxetine (Strattera®)

### What is atomoxetine used for?

Atomoxetine (at-a-moks-a-teen) is a non-stimulant medicine used to treat attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

It may take up to **6 weeks** for this medicine to build up in the body and produce its fullest effect.

### How should I give it?

Atomoxetine comes in capsule form, and should be swallowed whole if possible. Give it at regular times to keep a steady level in the bloodstream. Give this medicine exactly as prescribed, even if your child feels fine.

If your child cannot swallow pills, you can open the capsule, and mix the contents with a **very small** amount (about 1 teaspoon) of soft food, such as applesauce, chocolate syrup, ice cream, jelly, or yogurt. Make sure your child takes all of the mixture.

Do not mix medicine into hot drinks, because the heat may destroy its effectiveness.

### Are there any precautions about food or other medicines?

Give it with food to help prevent stomach pain.

Tell your doctor or nurse practitioner if your child also uses:

- asthma medicine, such as albuterol
- medicine for depression, such as Paxil®, Prozac®, or Zoloft®
- medicine to treat abnormal heart rhythm, such as disopyramide (Norpace®), quinidine (Cardioquin® or other brands)
- medicines that may cause high blood pressure, such as steroids, pseudoephedrine (Sudafed®),
- MAO inhibitors, such as Eldepryl®, Marplan®, Nardil®, or Parnate®

**Warning:** Other medicines may also interact with atomoxetine. Check with the doctor, nurse practitioner or pharmacist before giving **any** other prescription or non-prescription medicines, vitamins, or herbs.

Avoid alcohol-containing foods, beverages, or non-prescription medicines (such as cough syrup) while taking this medicine.

### What should I do if a dose is missed?

If one dose is missed, give it as soon as you remember, unless it is less than 8 hours until the next dose. In that case skip the missed dose and continue with the regular schedule. **Never give a double dose.**

If your child vomits (throws up) a dose, do not repeat the dose. Call the clinic if you have questions about what to do.

## What are the side effects?

- Common
- stomach pain
  - nausea (upset stomach)
  - vomiting (throwing up)
  - tiredness
  - weight loss
  - dizziness
  - headache
- Occasional
- constipation
  - dry mouth
  - mood swings

The person taking this medicine **should not** drive, operate machinery, or do anything else that could be dangerous until his or her reaction to this medicine is known.

## When should I call the clinic?

- Your child has suicidal thinking or if you are concerned they might hurt themselves
- your child urinates more or less often than usual
- fast or pounding heartbeat
- lightheaded, fainting
- signs of liver problems:
  - itchy skin
  - dark urine
  - yellow skin or eyes
  - tenderness in the upper right side of the abdomen (belly)
  - unexplained fever, aching, fatigue
- signs of allergic reaction:
  - fever or chills
  - rash or hives
  - wheezing
  - trouble breathing - **call 911**

## What else do I need to know?

Because atomoxetine may cause weight loss, the doctor or nurse practitioner will keep track of your child's height and weight.

You and your child should know the names of all the medicines he or she is taking.

**Share this information** with anyone involved in your child's care. Please bring the medicine container when your child comes to the clinic or emergency department.

Always make sure you have enough medicine on hand. Each time you refill your prescription, check to see how many refills are left. If no refills are left, the pharmacy will need 2 or 3 days to contact the clinic to renew the prescription.

Before giving the first dose, read the label. Be sure it is what was prescribed. After a refill, if the medicine looks different to you, ask your pharmacist about it before giving it.

Check the label for the expiration date. Ask your pharmacist what to do with outdated or unused medications. If there is no 'take-back' program empty them into the trash.

Store all medicines in their original container and away from direct sunlight or heat. Do not store in humid places such as the bathroom. Keep them out of children's reach, locked up if possible.

If too much or the wrong kind of medicine is taken, call the Poison Control Center toll-free at 1-800-222-1222. If your child is unconscious or has a seizure, **call 911**.

## Questions?

This sheet is not specific to your child but provides general information. If you have any questions, please call the clinic or pharmacy.

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