

## Methylphenidate Hydrochloride

**Generic:** Methylphenidate Hydrochloride

**Brand:** Ritalin® and Ritalin SR®

**Purpose:** Methylphenidate products are thought to increase the levels of norepinephrine and dopamine (chemical messengers) in your brain by blocking how fast they are available for your brain to use. People with ADHD have disruptions in these messengers and having more may help your brain cells communicate.

**Benefit:** Methylphenidate is proven to be safe and effective for treating ADHD.

**How to take:** Ritalin® can be divided if necessary to get the correct dose. Swallow Ritalin SR® whole.

**Who should take Ritalin®?** A person six or older with ADHD can take this medication.

**How does Ritalin® work?** Ritalin® works immediately. Ritalin SR® has a wax coating on the outside of the medication to prolong its effect, but there is not a smooth release of the medication meaning it may have variable effects.

**How long does Ritalin® last in your body?** Ritalin® 3-4 hours. Ritalin SR® 5-6 hours.

**Dosages:** Ritalin® is available in 10 and 20mg in Canada. The generic version also has a 5mg dose available. Ritalin SR® is only available in a 20mg tablet in Canada.

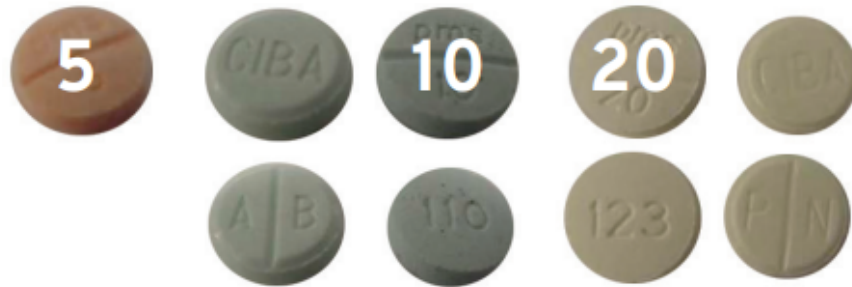


Figure 1: Quick Guide to ADHD Medication (Vincent 2019)

**Important!** Talk to your prescriber if you are planning to become pregnant or start breastfeeding while taking this medication. Taking Ritalin® may alter your ability to drive or operate machinery. Do not take any new medications, supplements, or vitamins without talking to your prescriber first.

**What if you miss a dose?** Do not take medication in the afternoon if you forget to take it in the morning. Skip the missed dose and take a dose the next day at the normal time. Do not take two doses.

### Common Side Effects for Psychostimulants:

- BP and HR increase
- Appetite suppression
- Constipation/Diarrhea
- Dry mouth

- GI upset
- Nausea/vomiting
- Anxiety
- Dizziness
- Dysphoria/irritability
- Headache
- Initial insomnia
- Rebound effect
- Tics
- Decrease in weight
- Sexual dysfunction (uncommon)
- Skin reactions

(CADDRA, 2020, p. 71)

**Remember:** This is not a complete list of side effects. Talk to your prescriber if you have any side effects that are bothersome or do not go away after a few weeks. Ritalin® is a controlled substance because it can lead to dependence, or it can be abused. **Selling or giving your medication to someone else is against the law.**

Note: Illustrations are not representative of size of ADHD capsules.

References:

1. CADDRA - Canadian ADHD Resource Alliance: Canadian ADHD Practice Guidelines, 4.1 Edition, Toronto ON; CADDRA 2020.
2. Novartis Pharmaceuticals Canada Inc. (2022, June 22). *Product Monograph*. (pp.27-33). PDF [https://pdf.hres.ca/dpd\\_pm/00066413.PDF](https://pdf.hres.ca/dpd_pm/00066413.PDF)
3. Vincent, Annick. (2019, September). *Quick Guide to ADHD Medication in Canada*. PDF. [https://attentiondeficit-info.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/adhd\\_en\\_canada\\_september2019.pdf](https://attentiondeficit-info.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/adhd_en_canada_september2019.pdf)