

## Atomoxetine Hydrochloride (ATX)

**Generic:** Atomoxetine (ATX)

**Brand:** Strattera®

**Purpose:** ATX is a selective norepinephrine reuptake inhibitor. It is not a stimulant and works by blocking the absorption of serotonin and norepinephrine in the brain so there is more available for the brain to use.

**Benefit:** Effect of treatment may not be reached until 6 to 8 weeks of taking this medication. Non-stimulants have a slower onset than stimulant medications, but they have an established safety profile like stimulant medications.

**How to take:** Should be swallowed whole. **Do not chew, crush or open capsules.** Take with or without food. Opening it may cause strong nausea or stomach irritation and contents should not be touched. If capsule breaks, wash hands and surfaces it touches and avoid getting it in eyes. If contact with eyes, rinse and seek medical attention.

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

**How does Strattera® work?** The brain communicates through cells called neurons. At the ends of the neurons there are spaces that the cells send chemical messages to each other called neurotransmitters. One of these neurotransmitters is called norepinephrine. This medication decreases how fast norepinephrine is reabsorbed, so brain cells have more of it available to use when sending messages to one another.

**How long does Strattera® last in your body?** Up to 24h. It may help people who have continued symptoms in the late evening or early morning.

**Dosages:** Capsules are available in 10, 18, 25, 40, 60, 80, and 100 mg



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

**Changes in dose:** Dose changes are typically done slowly (i.e., every 14 days) depending on how someone responds to the medication.

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

**What if you miss a dose?** If you forget a dose, take it when you remember but wait 24 hours before taking your next dose.

**Common Side Effects for Atomoxetine:**

- BP and HR increase
- Appetite suppression
- Constipation/Diarrhea
- Dry mouth
- GI upset
- Nausea/vomiting
- Anxiety
- Dysphoria/irritability
- Headache
- Initial insomnia
- Somnolence
- Tics (uncommon)
- Decrease in weight
- Sexual dysfunction
- 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. **Never give your medication away to someone else.**

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. Eli Lilly Canada Inc. (2015, October 1). *Product Monograph*. (pp. 49-52). PDF. [https://pdf.hres.ca/dpd\\_pm/00032230.PDF](https://pdf.hres.ca/dpd_pm/00032230.PDF)
3. Mayo Clinic Staff. (2019, October 5). *Serotonin and Norepinephrine reuptake inhibitors (SNRIs)*. Mayo Clinic. <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/depression/in-depth/antidepressants/art-20044970>
4. Rodden, J. (n.d.). *Strattera: ADHD Medication*. ADDitude Inside the ADHD mind. <https://www.additudemag.com/medication/strattera/>
5. 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)