



ADHD Medication

Medications for ADHD, such as stimulants (for example methylphenidate and amphetamines) and non-stimulants (such as atomoxetine and guanfacine), can be very effective in supporting focus, attention, and behaviour during the day. However, they can sometimes have an impact on sleep.

How they may impact sleep

- **Harder to fall asleep**

Some medications increase alertness and reduce feelings of sleepiness, which can make it more difficult for children to switch off at bedtime, even when they are tired

- **More night wakings**

Sleep may become lighter or more unsettled, leading to more frequent waking during the night or difficulty resettling

- **Changes to sleep quality**

Medication can affect how much time is spent in deeper stages of sleep, which are important for rest and recovery. This can result in children waking feeling less refreshed

- **Vivid dreams or nightmares**

Some children may experience more intense dreams, which can disrupt sleep or cause anxiety around bedtime

- **Appetite changes affecting sleep**

Reduced appetite during the day can sometimes lead to increased hunger in the evening or overnight, which may also impact sleep patterns





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If your child's sleep is being affected, there are practical steps that can help:

- **Keep a consistent bedtime routine**

Calm, predictable steps such as a bath, book, and quiet time help signal to the body that it is time to sleep

- **Allow time to wind down**

Build in a clear transition from busy or stimulating activities to more relaxed ones before bed

- **Consider medication timing**

Speak with your GP or prescribing professional about when medication is given, as this can sometimes be adjusted to reduce sleep disruption

- **Create a sleep-friendly environment**

A dark, cool, and quiet bedroom supports better sleep. Limiting light exposure in the evening can be especially helpful

- **Support regular eating patterns**

Offering a balanced evening snack may help if appetite has been lower earlier in the day

- **Keep wake-up times consistent**

A regular morning wake time helps regulate the body clock and supports better sleep the following night

