

## Lisdexamfetamine (say: lis-decks-am-feta-mean)

### What is lisdexamfetamine used for?

- Lisdexamfetamine (also called LDX or by its trade names Elvanse®, Elvanse Adult® and Tyvense®) is mainly used to help treat the symptoms of ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder).
- It is made as capsules.

- ☞ For ADHD, about 2 in 3 (70%) of people's symptoms improve with lisdexamfetamine
- ☞ If that doesn't work or it has too many side effects, then switching to methylphenidate means about half of those people get better (total of about 85%, or 3 in 4 people). There are other options after that e.g. other medicines and therapies.

### What is the usual dose of lisdexamfetamine?

- The usual dose of lisdexamfetamine is around 30-50mg a day
- It can be up to 70mg a day in adults.

### How should I take lisdexamfetamine?

- Swallow the capsules whole with at least half a glass of water whilst sitting or standing. This is to make sure that they reach the stomach and do not stick in the throat
- The capsules can be opened and the contents added to a glass of water or orange, or on yoghurt. Stir the liquid until fully dissolved and then drink straight away (or the lisdexamfetamine may stick to the glass)
- It can be taken with or after food.

### When should I take lisdexamfetamine?

- This should be in the morning, and not in the afternoon or later.

### What are the alternatives to lisdexamfetamine?

- There are other medicines (e.g. methylphenidate, atomoxetine, guanfacine), talking therapies and treatments for ADHD.

- ☞ See our "Handy chart" for ADHD to help you compare the medicines available and how long to take them
- ☞ This will help you talk to your prescriber, nurse, pharmacist or other healthcare professional.

### How long will lisdexamfetamine take to work?

- It usually starts to work within 1-2 hours of a dose
- The effect will then build over the next few weeks

### How long will I need to keep taking it for?

- Probably for several years - some people do well on it into their 20s and 30s

- It should be reviewed at least once a year by your specialist – how you feel on days when you don't have a dose is very helpful.

### Is lisdexamfetamine addictive and can I stop taking it suddenly?

- Lisdexamfetamine is a stimulant drug
- At smaller doses, it can be stopped suddenly
- At higher doses, it is possible that 'withdrawal' effects might be seen. These would include extreme tiredness, becoming even more hyperactive, eating more and depression
- If this happens then starting lisdexamfetamine again would get rid of these effects
- When the time comes, you should come off it by a gradual drop in the dose over several weeks
- It normally works out much better if you stop medication in a planned way at a time when your stress levels are lower, rather than e.g. around life events
- You should discuss this with your prescriber, pharmacist or other healthcare professional.

*See our handy fact sheet on 'Coming off Medicines'*  
The evidence shows that lisdexamfetamine will not cause someone to take illicit drugs when they are older. In fact the opposite appears to be true because children will not try to self-medicate with illicit drugs to help their symptoms.

### What should I do if I forget to take a dose of lisdexamfetamine at the right time?

- Take it as soon as you remember within about 2-3 hours of when it is due
- **BUT** do not take a dose any later than about lunchtime or it may be much more difficult to get to sleep
- Do not try to catch up by taking two or more doses at once as you may get more side effects

If you often have problems remembering your doses (as many people do) ask your pharmacist, doctor or nurse about this. There are some special packs, boxes and devices that can be used to help you remember.

### Will it affect my other medication?

Lisdexamfetamine has a few possible interactions with other medicines. The main ones include:

- The effect of lisdexamfetamine can be decreased a little by ascorbic acid (vitamin C), diets high in fruit and vegetables, or infections, antipsychotics (e.g. chlorpromazine, haloperidol)
- The effect of lisdexamfetamine can be decreased by beta-blockers (such as propranolol), lithium and some phenothiazines (e.g. pericyazine).

- Some cough medicines might also give some stimulating effects.

Please see the Patient Information Leaflet (PIL) for the full possible list. Not all of these interactions happen in everyone. Some of these medicines can still be used together but you will need to follow your doctor's instructions carefully.

### Will I need any blood or other tests?

- You should not need any blood tests but might need a heart check before starting it and checks on weight, height and blood pressure, probably twice a year.

### Can I drink alcohol while I am taking it?

- You should have no extra problems with lisdexamfetamine and alcohol in moderation.

### What about getting pregnant?

- Discuss this with your health professional - there are leaflets that can help give you the information you need to make a choice
- Usually people gradually reduce their dose before trying to get pregnant
- If you find yourself pregnant unexpectedly see your health professional as soon as possible.

### Can I drive or cycle while I am taking it?

- You may feel a bit dizzy at first
- Until you know that it is not affecting you, you should not cycle, drive or operate machines.

Lisdexamfetamine can help you concentrate and you may be less likely to have an accident but **only** if you take it regularly. (for more details go to [www.gov.uk/adhd-and-driving](http://www.gov.uk/adhd-and-driving)).  
In the UK it is legal to drive as long as you take lisdexamfetamine as prescribed by a doctor and you are sure that it doesn't affect your driving.

### What sort of side-effects might I get if I am taking lisdexamfetamine?

This table shows some of the most common side effects and any you might need to take action on. You must also see the maker's Patient Information Leaflet for the full list of possible side effects but do not be worried by this. Some people get no side effects at all. Some side effects are the brain getting used to a medicine and these usually wear off in a few days or weeks. Starting slower may help. If you think you might have a side effect to this medicine, you should ask your prescriber, pharmacist or other healthcare professional.

Side effect	What happens	What to do about it
<b>VERY COMMON</b> ( <i>more than about 1 in 10 people might get these</i> )		
Anorexia	Loss of weight, not feeling hungry.	If this is a problem, contact your doctor, dietician or pharmacist for advice. It can wear off after a few weeks. You can use some high calorie drink and food products to help if this begins to get a worry.
Insomnia	Not being able to fall asleep at night	Discuss this with your doctor. You may be able to change the time of your dose or doses. Make sure your last dose is before teatime, or even earlier. Some people find melatonin helps.
Headache	Your head is pounding and painful.	Try paracetamol. Your pharmacist will be able to advise if this is safe to take with any other medicines you may be taking.
<b>COMMON</b> ( <i>fewer than about 1 in 10 people might get these</i> )		
Stomach or chest pain, nausea and vomiting	Feeling sick and being sick. Stomach pain.	If it is bad, contact your doctor. It may be possible to adjust your dose. Taking it after food may help. It may wear off after a few weeks. This gets less common as you get older.
Dry mouth	Dry mouth	More common in adults. Try sucking boiled sweets.
Dizziness	Feeling light-headed and faint	Do not stand up too quickly. Try and lie down when you feel it coming on. Do not drive or cycle.
Nervousness	Feeling more anxious or nervous	This should wear off. If not, mention it to your doctor next time you meet.
Tachycardia	Fast heart beat	This usually wears off but can mean the dose is a bit too high so ask your doctor. This gets a bit common as you get older.
<b>Tell your prescriber if you get this side effect</b>		
Change in mood	Being aggressive, depressed, hostile and perhaps suicidal thinking.	It is more likely to occur after starting, a dose increase, or overdose. See your Doctor straight away if you have thoughts of harming yourself.

**The small print:** This leaflet is to help you understand more about your medicine. You must also read the manufacturer's Patient Information Leaflet (PIL). You may find more on the internet but beware as internet-based information is not always accurate. Do not share medicines with anyone else. The 'Handy charts' will help you compare the main medicines for each condition, how they work and their side effects. Go to our website for fuller answers to these and many other questions.

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