

# Atomoxetine

(pronounced ay - toe - mox - a - teen)

## Why has atomoxetine been prescribed?

Atomoxetine is a medication which improves attention and concentration. Atomoxetine is prescribed to treat Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) in children and adolescents. It is effective in managing ADHD as part of a comprehensive treatment programme.

## Are there any precautions with atomoxetine?

Atomoxetine is suitable for most people. As with all medicines, however, there are precautions. Your child's prescriber will usually check that it is safe to prescribe atomoxetine, but let the prescriber know if any of the following apply to your child, as extra care may be needed:

- a) if your child has low or high blood pressure, glaucoma or suffers from heart, liver or thyroid trouble.
- b) if your child is taking any other medication especially salbutamol or antidepressants. Also, tell your child's prescriber if you buy any medicine 'over the counter' from a pharmacy or supermarket for your child. Please also tell your prescriber if your child takes any alternative or complementary medicine such as Chinese herbal medicines.
- c) if your child is at risk of becoming pregnant.

## What is the usual dose of atomoxetine?

The dose of atomoxetine is usually worked out according to the weight of your child. This may be between 10mg and 40mg once or twice daily. The dose may then be increased after weekly intervals. It may take some time to get to the dose that is most suitable. The maximum dose is 100mg a day.

## How should atomoxetine be taken?

Atomoxetine is usually given once or twice daily. The second dose is given in the afternoon or early evening. However, you and the prescriber may decide that it is better for your child to take the medicine at another time.

## What form does atomoxetine come in?

Atomoxetine is available only as capsules. The capsules are available as 10mg, 18mg, 25mg, 40mg and 60mg.

## What should be done if a dose is missed?

If you forget to give your child a dose, give it as soon as you remember. If you miss a whole day's dose – just carry on as normal with the usual dose. If you miss more than a day's dose, speak to your prescriber.

## What will happen when atomoxetine is first taken?

Most people find that atomoxetine improves attention and concentration after a few days' treatment. Further improvements are usually seen over the first week or so of treatment. Adverse effects of atomoxetine are usually seen early in treatment. Some may wear off in time. The table below lists some of the side effects associated with atomoxetine. There are other possible side effects – we have listed only the most important ones. Ask your doctor, pharmacist or nurse if you are worried about anything else that you think might be a side effect. Further information on side effects is available in the official manufacturer's leaflet.

## Reporting side effects

The 'Yellow Card' scheme encourages patients to report any side effects that they feel may be caused by their medication. Ask your doctor, pharmacist or nurse for the forms if you wish to report any side effects. Alternatively, telephone 0800 100 3352 or go to [www.mhra.gov.uk](http://www.mhra.gov.uk).

Summary of side effects				
Side effect	How common is it?	What can be done about it?		
Reduced appetite	Common	Try to encourage healthy eating.		
Nausea (sometimes with vomiting)	Uncommon	This usually occurs when atomoxetine is started. This should wear off within a few days. Takin		
Abdominal pain	Uncommon	This usually occurs when atomoxetine is started. This should wear off within a few days. Taking the medication with food may help. Discuss with the prescriber if this persists.		
Insomnia or disturbed sleep	Common	Tell the prescriber if your child finds it difficult to get off to sleep or does not seem tired at their normal bedtime. It may be necessary to alter the timing of atomoxetine doses.		
Dry mouth	Uncommon	This should wear off within a few days. Sugar-free boiled sweets, chewing gum or eating citrus fruits may help. Discuss with the prescriber if this persists.		
Headache	Uncommon	This may wear off within a few days. Paracetamol can be taken but discuss with the prescriber if this persists.		
Dizziness	Uncommon	This may wear off within a few days. Discuss with the prescriber if this persists.		
Constipation	Uncommon	Try to ensure your child eats fruit and vegetables and drinks plenty of fluids. Your child's prescriber may prescribe a laxative.		
Tachycardia (palpitations)	Uncommon	Contact the prescriber if your child reports experiencing palpitations.		
Movement disorders	Uncommon	Tell the prescriber straightaway if any abnormal movements develop.		
Drowsiness	Rare	This should wear off within a few days or weeks. Discuss with the prescriber if this persists.		
Rash – which maybe raised or itchy	Very rare	Tell the prescriber straightaway if any rash develops.		
Suicidal thoughts	Very rare	Tell the prescriber straightaway if your child shows any signs of depression or reports thoughts of self-harm or suicide.		
Liver disorders	Very rare	The prescriber should regularly monitor liver function. Tell the prescriber straightaway if your child has yellowing of the skin or eyes, dark urine, unexplained stomach pain, nausea, tiredness or flu like symptoms.		
<i>Very common = almost everyone affected</i>	<i>Common = many people affected</i>	<i>Uncommon = some people affected</i>	<i>Rare = few people affected</i>	<i>Very rare = very few people affected</i>

#### Is atomoxetine addictive?

Atomoxetine is not addictive. When stopping the drug it is good practice to reduce the dose slowly.

#### What about alcohol?

Generally speaking people taking atomoxetine should avoid alcohol. Discuss any concerns you have with the doctor, pharmacist or nurse.

#### Is it OK to stop taking atomoxetine when symptoms go away?

No. If your child stops taking atomoxetine, your child's original symptoms are likely to return. Most people need to remain on atomoxetine for several months, sometimes longer. You should always discuss with your prescriber any plans you have to reduce or stop any of your prescribed medicines.

#### Are there any alternatives to atomoxetine?

Yes, there are alternatives available. These include other stimulants such as dexamphetamine and methylphenidate. Psychological and family therapies can also help in some people with ADHD, usually alongside medication.



Remember, leaflets like this can only describe some of the effects of medication. You may also find other books or leaflets useful. If you have access to the internet you may find a lot of information there as well, but be careful, as internet based information is not always accurate.

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This leaflet is to help you understand more about you medication. It is not an official manufacturer's Patient Information Leaflet (see [emc.medicines.org.uk/](http://emc.medicines.org.uk/)) For more information, you could contact your local hospital pharmacy – they might have a helpline – or visit [www.nwmhp.nhs.uk/pharmacy](http://www.nwmhp.nhs.uk/pharmacy).

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Medicines Information  
Pharmacy Department  
Maudsley Hospital  
LONDON SE5 8AZ  
TEL: 020 3228 2317

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