



# STIMULANT MEDICATION FACT SHEET



## PRESCRIPTION POLICY AND CONSENT FORM

Stimulant medications are considered a very safe and effective way to treat ADD/ADHD. Methylphenidate-the original stimulant-has been prescribed for over 50 years. Stimulants have a relatively short half-life: the effects last between a few hours to 12 hours depending on which preparation is used. The most common side effect is decreased appetite. Less common ones: stomach ache, headache, delay in falling asleep, irritability, behavior changes and mood changes. Many of these side effects are temporary and can be managed by adjusting the dose. On rare occasions stimulants may trigger or worsen tics-fortunately they usually disappear when the medication is discontinued. Concern about delayed growth has been raised but studies into adult life show no significant growth delay.

Some studies show that stimulants might increase the risk of irregular heart rate, increased blood pressure and possibly sudden death. These events are extremely rare [less than one in a million in the case of sudden death]. If your child has a heart condition or a serious heart condition exists in a close family member, please inform your doctor prior to starting the medication.

If your child is experiencing a suspected side effect, call your doctor or schedule an appointment to discuss. If you feel your child needs a medication adjustment or change, please make an appointment with your doctor. Remember that although stimulants are the most effective treatment of ADD/ADHD, other interventions such as counseling and behavioral modification programs as well as special learning and teaching interventions can be beneficial. The American Academy of Pediatrics does not recommend monitoring blood tests or ECG's for patients taking stimulants.

### Pediatric Associates Policy on Stimulant Refills and Follow-up Visits

- Stimulants are considered controlled substances; therefore refills cannot be called in to the pharmacy. Please call the office a few days before your child's prescription runs out. Your doctor will write a new prescription which you will need to pick up in the office. Some doctors may require an office visit for each prescription renewal.
- Follow up appointments are important to monitor for maximum effectiveness and possible side effects. National guidelines require the following follow-up visits:
  - A follow-up visit within one month of starting medication
  - 2 additional follow-up visits within the first 9 months of starting medication
- For established patients: Regular follow-up appointments separate from the annual physical exam.
- Prescription refills **will not** be given if more than one year has elapsed since the last physical exam

I have read the above and agree that my child \_\_\_\_\_ be treated with stimulant medication and understand the policy on refills and follow-up visits.

Parent Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Witness \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_