

Focalin

(dexamethylphenidate)

[Full Prescribing Information](#)

[DailyMed Drug Information](#)

Forms/Strengths

- **Tablets:** 2.5 mg, 5 mg, 10 mg

Dosing

- **Age:** ≥ 6 y/o
- **Onset:** ~ 30 minutes
- **Duration:** 5-6 hours
- **Considerations:** Give approximately 1/2 the methylphenidate dose. Administer orally twice daily, at least 4 hours apart, with or without food.
- **Initial Dose:**
 - **New to methylphenidate:** 2.5 mg twice daily
 - **Currently taking methylphenidate:** Start with half the current total daily dose of methylphenidate (up to 10 mg twice daily)
- **Titration:** Increase by 2.5-5 mg daily every 3 to 7 days
- **Max Dose:** 20 mg/day (10 mg twice daily)

Quick Facts

- Increases synaptic dopamine and norepinephrine by enhancing presynaptic release
- Improves focus, attention, and impulse control
- Immediate-release formulation for rapid onset
- Unique formulation contains the isolated active dextroisomer (dexamethylphenidate), potentially allowing for lower dosing
- Common side effects: decreased appetite, insomnia, increased blood pressure, headache

Indications

- **ADHD** (ICD-10: F90.0)
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Off-Label Uses

- **N/A**
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How to Take

- Take **once or twice daily**, with doses **at least 4 hours apart**.
 - Can be taken **with or without food**; high-fat meals may delay absorption.
 - Swallow the **tablet whole**; do not crush, chew, or split.
 - Avoid taking **late in the day** to prevent insomnia.
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Side Effects

- Decreased appetite, weight loss
 - Abdominal pain
 - Nausea
 - Insomnia
 - Tachycardia, potential elevations in blood pressure
 - Possible new or worsened psychiatric symptoms (psychosis, mania)
 - Priapism (rare, but serious)
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Monitoring / Labs

- **Cardiovascular:** Baseline and routine monitoring of heart rate and blood pressure.
 - **Growth in Pediatrics:** Regular monitoring of height and weight to detect growth suppression.
 - **Psychiatric Symptoms:** Observe for mood changes, anxiety, or psychosis.
 - **Abuse Potential:** Monitor for misuse or diversion.
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Education

- **When to Call the Doctor:**

- Severe **mood changes, aggression, or suicidal thoughts**.
- Chest pain, rapid heartbeat, shortness of breath (**cardiovascular concerns**).
- Uncontrolled movements, tics, or worsening anxiety.
- Numbness, coldness, or color changes in fingers or toes (**circulatory issues**).
- Unexplained weight loss or **delayed growth in pediatric patients**.

- **Safety Tips:**

- **Monitor blood pressure and heart rate**, especially in patients with cardiovascular risk.
- Use caution in patients with **anxiety, bipolar disorder, or psychosis**, as symptoms may worsen.
- Avoid **caffeine and other stimulants**, which may amplify side effects.
- Ensure **adequate hydration and nutrition**, as appetite suppression is common.
- **Tapering may be required** if discontinuing after long-term use.

- **Parent Tips for Pediatric Patients:**

- **Encourage a nutrient-dense diet** to counteract appetite suppression.
 - Administer in the **morning before school** for optimal effect.
 - Monitor **school performance and behavioral changes**.
 - Observe for **sleep disturbances**; adjust timing if necessary.
 - Communicate regularly with **teachers and caregivers** about medication effects.
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Additional Information

- **Contraindications:**

- **Hypersensitivity** to dexamethylphenidate or formulation components.
- **Use within 14 days of MAOI therapy** (risk of hypertensive crisis).
- Symptomatic **cardiovascular disease, moderate-to-severe hypertension, hyperthyroidism, glaucoma**.
- **History of substance use disorder**, unless benefits outweigh risks.

- **Pregnancy:**

- **Category C**; use only if benefits outweigh risks.
- May cause **neonatal withdrawal symptoms** or **low birth weight**.

- **Lactation:**

- **Excreted in breast milk; not recommended** due to potential infant exposure.

- **Drug Interactions:**

- **Serotonergic drugs** (e.g., SSRIs, SNRIs, MAOIs) increase **serotonin syndrome risk**.
 - **Acidifying agents** (e.g., ascorbic acid) may reduce drug absorption.
 - **Alkalinizing agents** (e.g., sodium bicarbonate) may increase dexamethylphenidate levels.
 - May potentiate **hypertensive effects** of certain medications (e.g., decongestants, beta-agonists).
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