



Information for Women Considering ADHD Medication

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Pregnancy & Breastfeeding

Most pregnant women with ADHD stop medication during pregnancy.

Rates of unplanned pregnancy are higher in women with ADHD; you may want to consider a reliable contraceptive. Continuing ADHD medication during pregnancy is thought to carry a small risk of birth defects. Some studies show no increased fetal or maternal complications and no negative impact on child development. Major research gaps remain. Little is really known about how other conditions, medication combinations (e.g., with antidepressants), trimester-specific effects, or dosage influence outcomes. Please discuss family planning with your clinician before and during titration. Talking about your specific needs will help them work with you to plan safe and effective care.

Most clinicians advise their pregnant patients to discontinue any inessential medication while nursing, as traces of the medication may show up in the mother's milk. Do consult your prescriber to discuss concerns and questions to help you make the best choice for you.

There are resources that you might find helpful such as <https://www.ndbirth.com/podcastor> and it might help to see an ADHD-informed therapist.

When a mum chooses to discontinue ADHD medication during pregnancy and/or breastfeeding, it can be helpful to tell their partner, family, and employer.

Some people with ADHD notice their symptoms aren't as difficult to manage during pregnancy. However, symptoms such as hyperactivity, inattention, and impulsivity may resurface. To manage this, mums might want to accept more support such as preparing meals or reminding them of appointments.

Let off steam by exercising gently regularly, find ways to help you relax, such as listening to music or learning relaxation techniques & talk to your doctor about your suitability to drive, as you will need to tell the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) if your ADHD affects your driving.

PMDD/PPD

ADHD can make someone more likely to experience premenstrual dysphoric disorder (PMDD) and postpartum depression (PPD). PMDD is a more intense form of PMS that can bring significant depression, anxiety, mood swings, and uncomfortable physical symptoms during the week before a period starts.

Some studies suggest that treatment options might include an SSRI, temporarily increasing stimulant medication during the week before your period, or using hormonal birth control. As always, it's important to check in with your Psicon prescriber and your GP to find the right approach for you.

Menopause and Perimenopause

Menopause and perimenopause might make your ADHD symptoms a harder to manage when oestrogen levels start to drop. Lots of women find they struggle with memory and finding the right words, for example. Lower oestrogen levels can also lead to mood swings or other mood issues. For some women, the change in how they think and feel can be distressing. The usual strategies for managing ADHD might not work as well as they used to.



It's a good idea to chat with your prescriber about these challenges. We recommend being cautious about increasing stimulant medication without a solid review, as it might not be the best solution. It's wise to discuss the possibility of hormone replacement therapy with your GP so you're fully informed about all your options. It can help to think about whether these issues have been present all along or if they've gotten worse since perimenopause. It's important to rule out other causes too; similar symptoms can occur with thyroid problems, for example.

If you're able to, it often makes a difference to get more support from those around you. Delegating tasks and reminders/routines can really help. You can also find advice through occupational health services or Access to Work (<https://www.gov.uk/access-to-work>).

Cardiovascular Disease

The risk of cardiovascular disease goes up for all women during perimenopause. If menopause starts before age 40, it's considered premature, and that raises the risk even more. Women with ADHD may have an even higher risk, since premature menopause seems to be more common in this group. It's also important to remember that women often have different heart-disease symptoms than men.

For many women, signs of a heart attack can include chest tightness, or a feeling like a harness or too-tight bra, shortness of breath, back pain, indigestion, nausea or vomiting. There is more information at <https://www.bhf.org.uk/informationsupport/support/women-with-a-heart-condition/women-and-heart-disease>.

When treating cardiac issues, clinicians often start with lifestyle changes. These can be especially tough for people with ADHD. Getting appropriate treatment and support can make it easier to build healthier habits around diet, exercise, and daily routines. During ADHD treatment, blood pressure and heart rate should be monitored, since medication can affect both.