

ADHD & medication: straight answers

Balanced, non-alarmist information for adults weighing up whether medication has a place in their plan — and for the families around them.

01 Is medication the "main" treatment for ADHD?

It is **one tool, not the whole toolkit**. For many adults it is the single most effective one — but it works best inside a plan that also protects sleep, adapts the environment, and builds executive-function skills. Medication can improve the signal; the rest of the work decides what you do with a clearer signal.

02 What does it actually do?

Most ADHD medications work by improving the availability of the brain chemicals (dopamine and noradrenaline) that support attention regulation and impulse control. In plain terms, many people describe a quieter mental background, a smaller gap between intention and action, and less white-knuckle effort to do ordinary things.

"It didn't make me someone else. It made it possible to be who I already was, with less friction."

It does not manufacture motivation, install organisation, or fix a life. It lowers the volume on the noise so the skills you build can actually land.

03 Is it addictive? Will it change my personality?

These are the two fears we hear most, and both deserve a straight answer. Taken as prescribed and monitored by a specialist, medication for ADHD is **not the same as recreational use**, and appropriately treated ADHD is associated with *lower*, not higher, rates of substance problems over time. A well-judged dose should make you feel **more like yourself**, not less. Feeling flat, wired or "not you" is information — it usually means the type or dose needs adjusting, not that medication is wrong for you.

04 Are there different kinds?

- **Stimulant medications** — the most studied and, for many, the most effective first line.

- **Non-stimulant medications** — a valuable alternative where stimulants don't suit, aren't tolerated, or aren't appropriate.

Which fits depends on your history, your health and your goals. This is a specialist medical decision — made carefully, and never on a first impression.

05 How will we know if it's working?

By measuring, not guessing. We define what "better" looks like for *you* before starting — task initiation, fewer late-night catch-ups, steadier mood, a specific domain of life — and review against it. Finding the right medication and dose is usually a **process of careful adjustment**, not a single perfect prescription.

06 What if I'd rather not take anything?

That is a legitimate choice, and a common one. Medication is an option, never an obligation. ADHD-adapted therapy, executive-function supports and environmental change all help in their own right — and the door to a medication review stays open if circumstances change. Our job is to give you an honest map, not to march you down one road.

A NOTE ON THIS DOCUMENT

This is general information, not a prescription or individual medical advice. Decisions about medication are made with an appropriately qualified prescriber, alongside your full medical history and sleep. We are happy to help you think it through.