



Effects of Adderall on the Body



Medically reviewed by [Timothy J. Legg, PhD, PsyD, CRNP, ACRN, CPH](#) on September 25, 2017 — Written by Ann Pietrangelo and Kristeen Cherney

For people diagnosed with [attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder \(ADHD\)](#), Adderall helps to improve concentration and focus. As a central nervous system stimulant it can also have the very same effects on people without ADHD.

If you take Adderall for ADHD, or for other purposes, it's important to be aware of the side effects. Effects can be positive when Adderall is taken as intended, but for people without ADHD who use the drug without medical supervision, the effects can be dangerous. Learn more about the range of effects this stimulant has on your body.

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central nervous system stimulant

Adderall stimulates the central nervous system. In fact, a reported 70 percent of adults and up to 80 percent of children show improvement in their ADHD symptoms when taking nervous system stimulants.

thought problems

Nervous system stimulants can cause hallucinations or other thought problems, especially for those who have existing mental illnesses. However, this potential side effect has been the subject of controversy.

withdrawal

If you take large amounts of Adderall without a medical need and stop suddenly, you might experience side effects like fatigue.

improved attention span

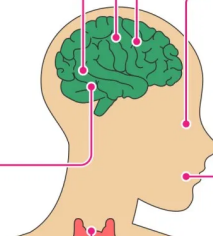
Adderall boosts certain chemicals in your brain, making it easier to stay focused.

sleeping problems

Insomnia can occur in some people taking Adderall. You may have trouble either falling asleep or staying asleep.

dry mouth

Experiencing hoarseness and dry mouth may be due to Adderall.



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Be immediately reported to your doctor. If you have trouble breathing, you should call 911 immediately.

Adderall may cause shortness of breath or trouble breathing. If that happens, contact your doctor immediately.

high blood pressure

Adderall can raise your blood pressure, so it may not be a good choice if you already have high blood pressure.

stomachache

Adderall may cause constipation, which can also give you a stomachache.

increased heart rate

Adderall can increase your heart rate, which can be an issue if you have preexisting heart problems.

loss of appetite

Loss of appetite may be the result of nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea. These may all be side effects of Adderall.

hives

You may develop itchy skin, a rash, or hives as an allergic reaction to Adderall. Talk to your doctor immediately if a skin reaction occurs.

nervousness

When taking stimulants, some people feel restless and nervous. People without ADHD who take Adderall tend to feel these effects more.

numb fingers

Numbness in your fingers may suggest problems with your circulation. This may be problematic if you have underlying circulatory problems.

weight loss

Weight loss may be a temporary side effect of Adderall. It may also slow down weight gain in children.

constricted blood vessels

Adderall can cause your blood vessels to constrict. If you have underlying circulatory problems, this may be an issue.

slowed growth

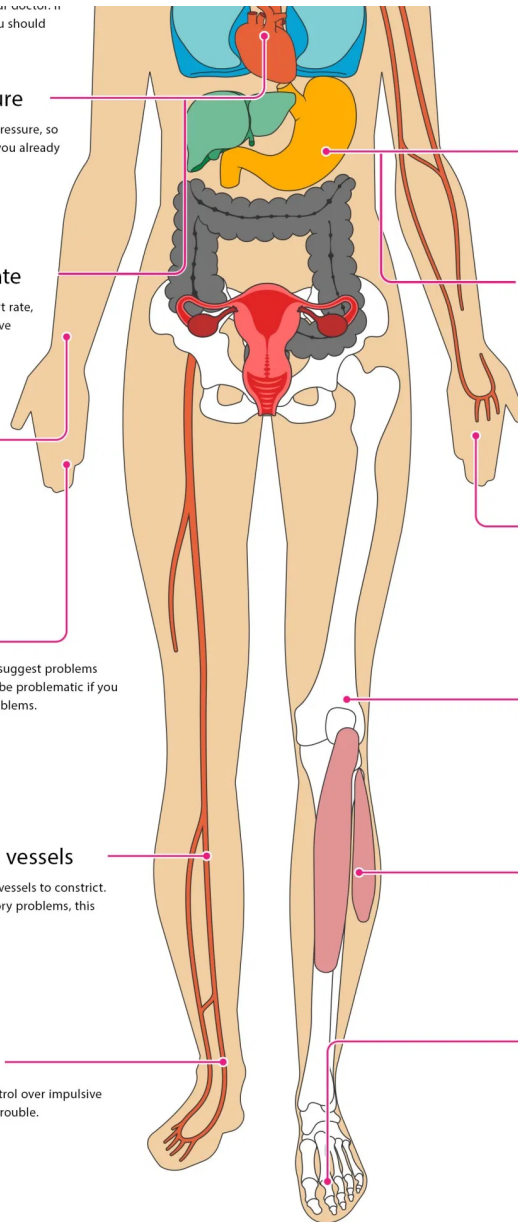
For children who take Adderall, growth may slow down.

impulse control

Adderall can help you gain control over impulsive behaviors that may get you in trouble.

cold toes

Cold toes may mean that Adderall is interfering with your circulation, which may be problematic if you have underlying circulatory problems.



Adderall is a brand name for the combination of dextroamphetamine and amphetamine. It's a prescription drug used primarily to treat ADHD or **narcolepsy (daytime sleepiness)**. The medication alters certain naturally-occurring chemicals in your brain by enhancing the effects of neurotransmitters such as dopamine and norepinephrine.

For ADHD, Adderall is designed to improve hyperactivity, impulsive behavior, and attention span. According to the **Cleveland Clinic**, stimulants like Adderall improve symptoms of ADHD in 70 to 80 percent of children, and in 70 percent of adults. The positive effects can be even greater when it's used along with **behavioral therapy**.

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most likely start you off with a low dose to make sure you can tolerate it. Then, the dose can be slowly increased.

Before taking Adderall, tell your doctor about any preexisting physical or mental health problems you have and list all other prescription and over-the-counter medications you take. Adderall is a federally controlled substance that should never be taken without medical supervision.

Central nervous system

When prescribed and taken as directed, Adderall's effects on the central nervous system can provide some positive effects. You may be more awake during the day, as well as become more focused and calm.

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Still, there are potential side effects, including:

- nervousness
- restlessness
- [headaches](#)
- problems getting to sleep or staying asleep
- [dizziness](#)
- [dry mouth](#)
- [hoarseness](#)
- slowed speech
- changes in vision

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Serious side effects include [fever](#) and [weakness](#), or [numbness of the limbs](#). An [allergic reaction](#) to Adderall may cause swelling of the [tongue](#), throat, or [face](#). This is a medical emergency and should be treated immediately.

Other serious side effects include:

- [uncontrollable shaking, tics](#), or [seizures](#)
- [hallucinations, paranoia](#), and other thought problems
- worsening [mental health conditions](#), such as [depression](#) or [anxiety](#)

If you experience any of these symptoms, you should contact your doctor immediately.

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Abusing or overusing Adderall and then stopping suddenly can cause symptoms of withdrawal, such as:

- feeling uneasy
- sleep problems, whether [insomnia](#) (trouble falling or staying asleep) or [sleeping too much](#)
- [hunger](#)
- anxiety and irritability
- [panic attacks](#)
- [fatigue](#) or lack of energy
- depression
- phobias or panic attacks

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There's no treatment for an [Adderall withdrawal](#). Instead, you may have to wait out the symptoms, which can last anywhere from a few days to a few weeks. Maintaining a regular routine can help with the withdrawal.

Circulatory and respiratory systems

Stimulants can make your blood vessels constrict, raise your blood pressure, and make your heart beat faster. In some cases, Adderall can cause further interference with your blood circulation. Your toes and fingers may become numb, or start to hurt. They may even turn blue or red.

Serious side effects of Adderall include [heart attack](#) and [stroke](#). Contact your doctor immediately if you experience [chest pain](#), [shortness of breath](#), difficulty breathing, or [fainting](#). Adderall can lead to sudden death in people with preexisting heart conditions.

Taking [Adderall alongside alcohol](#) increases your chances of having heart problems. Adderall may also affect how drunk you feel, which can also increase your chance of alcohol poisoning.

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Digestive system

Adderall increases the amount of glucose released into your system. This may lead to:

- [stomach pain](#)
- [constipation](#)

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- [diarrhea](#)

[Loss of appetite](#) and [weight loss](#) are also possible, which can slow down weight gain in growing children who take the medication. Weight loss in adults is a temporary side effect, and appetite should increase as your body adjusts to the medication.


Integumentary system

Some people experience allergic reactions, which can cause the [skin to itch](#). Taking Adderall may also result in:

- [hives](#)
- a [rash](#)
- [blistering skin](#)

Report serious side effects immediately to your doctor.

Takeaway

It's important to remember that even though many people may take Adderall without a prescription — a study of 175 college students found that only [two percent](#)  thought Adderall was “very dangerous” — it's still a powerful stimulant.

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Stimulants can be addictive, and it's possible to become dependent on them if your dosage isn't monitored by a medical professional. Talk to your doctor if you're experiencing any side effects from Adderall. They'll

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