

# Shared care for adult ADHD - FAQ

## 1. Is there a risk of abuse/addiction?

Research in this area has concluded that methylphenidate is distinctly different from other stimulants such as cocaine, both pharmaco-kinetically and pharmaco-dynamically.

Methylphenidate enters and clears the brain much more slowly and this “limits the abuse potential” (Valokow et al 1995, 2002).

## 2. Can the use of the stimulant leads to increased risk of abuse/addiction of illicit drugs?

Robinson and Berridge 1993 proposed “sensitisation hypothesis” claiming that there is an increased risk. Research by others (Lamburd and Hartsough 1998; Barkley et al 2003) has concluded that “no compelling evidence that stimulant treatment in children with ADHD leads to an increased risk of substance experimentation, use, dependence or abuse by adulthood”.

## 3. Is the use of the stimulants a protective factor against the risk of abuse/addiction of illicit drugs?

Several studies have found evidence that there is up to 1.9 fold reduction in subsequent illicit drug use. (Biederman et al 1997, 1999; Wilens, Faraone et al 2003, 2005).

## 4. Diversion/abuse?

There is an issue with diversion but studies have shown that it is more of a view of use by university students for the purpose of performance enhancement re: studies/exams (Teter et al 2006).

## How many are CAMHS patients transitioning?

About 70% of 18 year olds receiving treatment will continue to require treatment into adulthood

## When would you stop treatment?

1. When ADHD symptoms are not causing moderate to severe functional impairment. i.e. patient can function even with existing ADHD symptoms.
2. When ADHD medication is not effective/not controlling ADHD symptoms. i.e. - No significant benefits when they take medication compared to when they do not.
3. Patient does not want medication or poor compliance with treatment plan
4. Patient prefers psychological and behaviour strategies to pharmacological treatment

## What's the Referral process?

All ADHD referrals need to be sent to:

Joanna Keegan, ADHD administrator  
Ramsay House  
West Park,  
Horton Lane  
Epsom, KT19 8PB