

ADHD Medication Guidelines for Children and Adolescents

Age 6 -17 Years

Level 0

Comprehensive assessment includes a detailed developmental and symptom history. Use of rating scales is highly recommended such as:

- ADHD Rating Scale IV questionnaire.
- Conners' ADHD rating scale.
- Vanderbilt ADHD Diagnostic Parent and Teacher Rating scales.
- Facilitate family engagement, psychoeducation about ADHD (evidence-based behavior and medication treatments, and educational interventions), and treatment preference assessment. Treatment response should be monitored using rating scales and appropriate safety assessments (vital signs, height, weight).

Level 1

Psychostimulant monotherapy (methylphenidate class or amphetamine class, either short or long acting). If first choice is ineffective try alternate preparation. (See table of ADHD medications).

Level 2

- 2a. Atomoxetine or monotherapy with extended release alpha 2 agonist.
- 2b. If partial stimulant response, consider combination of extended release alpha 2 agonist with psychostimulant.

Level 3

Immediate release alpha 2 agonist.

Level 4

Diagnostic reconsideration if none of the above agents result in satisfactory treatment. Consider bupropion or tricyclic antidepressant (desipramine not recommended due to safety concerns). Consider other alpha-agonist not tried at level 3 (can be used as monotherapy or combination). Despite limited evidence these medications may be considered.

Not Recommended:

- Antipsychotic medication to treat core symptoms of ADHD.