The ADHD Patch: What Is It?

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The ADHD Patch: An ADHD Medication You Probably Never Heard Of

Did you know there's a patch you can use to treat ADHD? The patch goes by the name Daytrana and has been available since 2006.

For reasons which we will cover in this article, Daytrana lacks the popularity of other ADHD medications like Adderall, Concerta, and Ritalin.

What Is the ADHD Patch?

The Daytrana patch for ADHD works kind of like a nicotine patch that helps people to quit smoking. Except Daytrana is a patch someone can wear to treat their ADHD.

It can be worn for up to 9 hours, with effects lasting up to 10 hours. It takes two hours to take effect and continues working for two hours after being taken off.

The primary ingredient of Daytrana is the same as the one in Ritalin, Concerta, and Focalin: methylphenidate. This means Daytrana has the same side effects as Ritalin and the other medications just mentioned.

To use the ADHD patch, open the container and apply the patch to you or your child's hip below the waistline. And yes, it's sticky, so the wearer can swim, bathe, or exercise while wearing the patch.

The Advantages and Disadvantages of the ADHD Patch

What makes Daytrana different is that it is the only FDA approved ADHD medication that comes as a patch. This offers several unique advantages and disadvantages compared to other ADHD medications.

Advantages of Daytrana

- **Delivery system** – For people who cannot swallow pills, the patch could be their solution.
- **More control** – Unlike an oral medication, you can put the patch on any time you want. Once you take oral ADHD medication, you are forced to let the medication run its course. But the patch allows the person wearing it to control when their ADHD medication is in effect.

Disadvantages of Daytrana

- **Slow acting** – Other medications take effect faster. If you want the patch to be in effect at 8 A.M., then you have to put it on by 6 A.M. Imagine the difficulties, especially with children in the morning.
- **You may take it off** – Once you take a pill, that's that. Patches not so much. Patches may cause itching and other types of skin irritation. Unfortunately, if you take the patch off, then you can't receive the

benefits of its medicine. The ADHD patch is not for those who have trouble keeping their commitments.
- **Stigma** – Adults don't have to worry about this too much, but kids in school do. For example, while your child is changing clothes in gym class, someone may see their patch and ask what it is. This could cause your child to feel ashamed.
- **Requires a different approach** – With pills, you swallow them and go about your day. However, with Daytrana, it's different in that you cannot apply the patch to the same area every day. This makes the patch a bit of a hassle to get used to.

The Side Effects of the ADHD Patch

As mentioned earlier, the side effects of Daytrana are almost identical to Ritalin. However, Daytrana has patch-related side effects that Ritalin does not.

Common side effects and risks of Daytrana and other ADHD medications (i.e., Ritalin):

- Poor appetite
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Stomach pain
- Weight loss
- Tics
- Trouble sleeping
- Mood swings
- Dizziness

Common and unique side effects only found in Daytrana:

- Redness where the patch is applied
- Small bumps where the patch is applied
- An itchy feeling while wearing the patch
- Skin rash after taking off the patch

Rare and unique side effect only found in Daytrana:

- Permanent skin discoloration, as warned by the FDA. (Typically happens when you apply the patch to the same area repeatedly or wear the patch for longer than 9 hours.)

There's one more thing you should know about the side effects of Daytrana. Daytrana was originally denied approval by the FDA. The reason why is because Daytrana's side effects become more common after 9 hours of use.

As a result of not being approved by the FDA, the makers of Daytrana lowered the recommended use time for Daytrana to exactly 9 hours to get FDA approval.

Make sure you or your child do not wear the Daytrana patch longer than nine hours.

To avoid most of Daytrana's side effects, be sure to apply the patch to different areas of the skin each time you use it. Also, never apply Daytrana to irritated or damaged skin. Doing so increases the amount of medication that enters the bloodstream, which could be lethal.

Why Is the Patch Not as Popular as Ritalin or Adderall?

Sales of Daytrana have suffered from consistent product recalls. As recent as September 2017, Daytrana was recalled because of problems with the way it stuck to the skin.

Before September 2017, Daytrana had been recalled at least ten other times for the same reason. I want to make it clear that these recalls were considered minor and not life-threatening.

Regardless of their seriousness, these recalls halted sales of Daytrana and left people with no other choice but to use a different medication.

However, what makes Daytrana unpopular is its price. The patent on Daytrana has not yet expired, so a cheaper generic version is unavailable at this time.

If you want an ADHD patch, you *have* to buy Daytrana, the sole brand name version. This results in monopoly-like pricing.

The good news, as of December 2018, is that the makers of Daytrana are offering a discount to people who qualify. Without the discount, you can expect to pay between $330 and $400 USD for a 30 day Daytrana prescription.