

Psychopharmacology Pearls

Our PAL team has compiled a collection of medication suggestions for common child and adolescent psychiatric diagnoses. This list contains many of the commonly used FDA-approved treatments for youth, and may be used as a practice resource. The list is organized by diagnosis. You may reach out to the PAL Program with any patient-specific questions.

ADHD

Medication	Starting dose	Max dose	Peak effect	Duration	Clinical Pearls
Methylphenidates					
Ritalin IR (6-12 years old)	5 mg BID	10-60 mg; divided BID or TID	Peaks in 1-3 hour	4 hours	PATS showed medication safe and efficacious in pre-school patients (3-5 years old) but first line treatment remains behavioral therapy in this age group
Ritalin LA (6-12 years old)	20 mg daily	10-60 mg	2 Peaks: 1-3 hours then 5-6 hours	8-12 hours	Can open capsule and sprinkle on applesauce

Focalin IR (6-17 years old)	2.5 mg BID	5-20 mg; divided BID	Peaks in ~1 hour	4 hours	
Focalin XR (6-17 years old)	5 mg daily	5-30 mg daily	2 Peaks: 1.5 hours then 6 hours	10 hours	
Concerta	6-12 years old: 18 mg daily 13-17 years old: 18 mg	18-54 mg daily 18-72 mg daily	2 Peaks: 2 hours then 2-4 hours then slow release phase and gradual decline	8 -12 hours	Simulates TID dosing Avoid in those with bowel obstructions
Quillivant XR (6 years old) 25 mg/5mL	20 mg daily	20-60 mg daily	Peaks in 4 hours	12 hours	Extended release solution comprised of 20% immediate release and 80% extended release methylphenidate
Amphetamine					
Adderall	2.5 mg daily (3-5 years old) 5mg 1-2 times a day (6-17 years old)	5-40 mg divided BID (6-17 years old)	Peaks in 3 hours	5 hours	
Adderall XR (6-17 years old)	10 mg daily	5-30 mg daily	Peaks in 7 hours	10 hours	Bead filled capsule simulating BID dosing with 50% dose delivered immediately and 50% delayed

					release
Vyvanse	30 mg daily	10-60 mg daily	Peaks in 3-4 hours	10 hours	Prodrug of dextroamphetamine Activated in the gut preventing snorting or injecting. Dose reduction required for renal impairment.
Dexedrine	5 mg 1-2 times a day (6-17 years old)	10-60 mg daily	Peaks 2-3 hours	4 hours	Contains only D-isomer
Non-stimulant Medication					
Strattera (Atomoxetine)	< 70 kg: 0.5 mg/kg/day for 4 days; then 1 mg/kg/day for 4 days; then 1.2 mg/kg/day	Lesser of 1.4 mg/kg or 100 mg			Dose at night initially to minimize GI side effects. Can be sprinkled if can't swallow capsule - caution, powder is an ocular irritant.
Intuniv (guanfacine ER)	1 mg qd then titrate up by 1 mg increments once per week	Lesser of 0.12 mg/kg or 4 mg qd (6-12 years) 7 mg q.d. (13-17 years)			Do not abruptly discontinue. Taper the daily dose of Intuniv by no more than 1 mg every 3 to 7 days to avoid rebound hypertension.

KAPVAY (clonidine ER)	0.1 mg/day at bed time	0.4 mg/day in divided dose of 0.2 mg bid			Do not abruptly discontinue. Taper the daily dose of Kapvay by no more than 0.1 mg every 3 to 7 days to avoid rebound hypertension.
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Aggression/Irritability (Autism)

Medication	Children (>6 years)	Adolescent (13-17 years)
Alpha-agonists (Clonidine, Guanfacine (ER))	Intuniv: 1 mg qd then titrate up by 1 mg increments once per week - Max dose: Lesser of 0.12 mg/kg or 4 mg daily (6-12 years) and 7 mg daily (13-17 years). Clonidine: 0.1 mg/day at bedtime - Max dose: 0.4 mg/day in divided doses of 0.2 mg bid.	
Atomoxetine	Starting dose: < 70 kg: 0.5 mg/kg/day for 4 days; then 1 mg/kg/day for 4 days; then 1.2 mg/kg/day Max dose: 1.8 mg/kg for children over 8 years old	
Risperidone	Starting dose: 0.1 to 0.25 mg/day Max dose: 2 mg/day	Starting dose: 0.5 mg/day Max dose: 4 mg/day
Aripiprazole	Starting dose: 1 to 2.5 mg/day Max dose: 10 mg/day	Starting dose: 1 to 2.5 mg/day Max dose: 15 mg/day

- Bolded indicates FDA approved for aggression/irritability in Autistic patients

Anxiety

Medication	Children (6-12 years)	Adolescent (13-17 years)
Fluoxetine*	Starting dose: 2.5–5 mg/day Max dose: 20–40 mg/day	5–10 mg/day 40–60 mg/day
Sertraline*	Starting dose: 10–12.5 mg/day Max dose: 100–150 mg/day	25 mg/day 150–200 mg/day
Escitalopram	Starting dose: 2.5 mg/day Max dose: 10–20 mg/day	5 mg/day 20–30 mg/day
Fluvoxamine*	Starting dose: 12.5–25 mg/day Max dose: 100–200 mg/day	25 mg/day 150–300 mg/day
Children and Adolescents ages 7 - 17 years		
Paroxetine*	Starting dose: 10 mg/day then increase by 10 mg/day every 1 to 2 weeks Max dose: 60 mg/day	
Duloxetine	Starting dose: 30 mg/day then increase by 30 mg/day after 2 weeks Max dose: 120 mg/day	
Venlafaxine ER	Starting dose: 37.5 mg/day then increase by 37.5 mg/day every 4 to 7 days Max dose: 225 mg/day	

- Bolded indicates FDA approved for generalized anxiety disorder

- * indicates FDA approved for Obsessive Compulsive Disorder

Depression

Fluoxetine (ages 8 years and older)	20–60 mg (initial dose may be 10 mg)
Escitalopram (ages 12 years and older)	10–20 mg (initial dose may be 2.5–5 mg)