



RITALIN

April 2003

Ritalin is a medication prescribed for individuals with an abnormally high level of activity or with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). It is also occasionally prescribed for treating narcolepsy. Ritalin is the trade name for methylphenidate. It stimulates the central nervous system, with effects similar to but less potent than amphetamines and more potent than caffeine.

Ritalin has a notably calming effect on hyperactive children and a "focusing" effect on those with ADHD so that, when taken as prescribed, Ritalin can be a valuable medicine. Further, research funded by the National Institute of Mental Health has shown that people with ADHD do not get addicted to their stimulant medications at treatment dosages.

Because of its stimulant properties, however, in recent years, there have been reports of its abuse by people for whom it is not a medication. Some individuals abuse it for its stimulant effects: appetite suppression, wakefulness, increased focus/attentiveness, and euphoria.

- ?? Some stimulant users mix Ritalin (or West Coast) with heroin, or with both cocaine and heroin for a more potent effect.
- ?? Middle and high school students crush and inhale the drug, take the pill orally or dissolve the tablet in water and inject the mixture.
- ?? Some adults have been admitted to treatment programs for abusing the drug from their children's prescriptions.
- ?? According to reports by youth treatment providers, some adolescents continue to abuse the drug, which is most easily available through diverted prescriptions. Drug abuse treatment staffs in Boston also report an increase in abuse among adults.

Because stimulant medicines such as Ritalin do have potential for abuse, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) has placed stringent controls on their manufacture, distribution, and prescription.

Following are some street terms for Ritalin and Ritalin taken in combination with other drugs:

Crackers	LSD, Talwin* and Ritalin combination is injected and produces an effect similar to the effect of heroin mixed with cocaine
Ones and Ones	Talwin and Ritalin combination (same as above)
Pharming	Consuming a mixture of prescription substances.
Poor man's heroin	Talwin and Ritalin combination (same as above)
Set	Place where drugs are sold; Talwin and Ritalin combination (same as above)
Speedball	Cocaine mixed with heroin; crack and heroin smoked together; methylphenidate (Ritalin) mixed with heroin; amphetamine.
Ts and Rits	Talwin and Ritalin combination (same as above)
Ts and Rs	Talwin and Ritalin combination (same as above)
Vitamin R	Ritalin (methylphenidate)
West Coast	Ritalin (methylphenidate)

*(Talwin is a prescription medication, an analgesic for pain. It can have severe, potentially lethal reactions from misuse. It is a narcotic.)

(Sources: nida.nih.gov; ONDCP; the antidrug.com)

