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What is the Difference Between Adderall and Ritalin?

Nick - January 25, 2022

When it comes to prescription medications, there are always risks of reactions, short-term side effects, and dependence. The risks and side effects increase when it comes to prescription stimulant medications like Adderall and Ritalin, which are dosed for children as young as three. Individuals who use these medications long term can expect to become addicted and require some type of withdrawal support when the time comes to stop the medication.

At Impact Outpatient Program, our staff works with individuals through every step of the addiction treatment process to support the client's progress and development. Through goal-setting, mindfulness, and other therapeutic techniques, our experienced professionals support clients through addiction treatment.

Check out Impact Outpatient Program in Lexington, Kentucky, today to see how we can support you on your journey of recovery.

What are Adderall and Ritalin?

Adderall and Ritalin are two of the most common medications prescribed to individuals with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. While the drugs are different, they have similar effects on the body and can have varying degrees of effectiveness depending on the dosage.

Adderall and Ritalin work to increase dopamine and norepinephrine, which activate the brain's reward centers. This helps individuals increase attention and decrease impulsiveness. While these medications can create a euphoric "rush," many individuals also experience the short-term side effects of prescription stimulant use.

These symptoms can open individuals up to increased health problems related to their heart, brain, liver, kidneys, and lungs.

What is the difference between Adderall and Ritalin?

Individuals who are prescribed Adderall are taking a drug combination of amphetamine and dextroamphetamine. These drugs are in the stimulant family along with methamphetamine and are similarly addictive. Ritalin is made of methylphenidate hydrochloride and is another stimulant, although it is closely related to cocaine than meth.

Ritalin and Adderall are both taken 2-3 times a day and 4-6 hours apart; however, Ritalin should be taken 30-45 minutes prior to eating, while Adderall can be taken whenever.

Additionally, Ritalin may cause priapism, a painful and prolonged erection that a doctor should evaluate as it can cause lasting damage.

What are the signs of Ritalin and Adderall use?

Ritalin and Adderall use can have long-lasting effects and cause multiple dangerous withdrawal symptoms for individuals who are ready to stop use.

Individuals who take prescription stimulants regularly run the risk of developing a tolerance, sensitivity, and dependence on the drug. A sensitivity to Ritalin and Adderall can lead to psychosis, anger, and paranoia, while tolerance and dependence can lead to increased drug use and the possibility of overdose.

Individuals who overdose on prescription stimulants may experience:

- Restlessness
- Tremors
- rapid breathing
- Confusion
- Hallucinations
- Fever
- Muscle pains

According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, there are additional concerns for individuals who use prescription stimulants long-term.

They also may have heart problems, including an irregular heartbeat leading to a heart attack, nerve problems that can lead to a seizure, abnormally high or low blood pressure, and circulation failure. Stomach issues may include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and abdominal cramps. In addition, an overdose can result in convulsions, coma, and fatal poisoning."

Addiction Treatment and Detox for Ritalin and Adderall Abuse

Comprehensive addiction treatment centers support individuals struggling with Ritalin abuse and Adderall abuse. Substance abuse disorders for prescription medications require substantial treatment to accommodate the fact that individuals also have an additional mental health disorder to manage.

For example, individuals who become addicted to their Adderall or Ritalin prescription must also manage their symptoms after coming off the drug, which can be most supported in inpatient residential rehab. There they can receive comprehensive care for addiction and their disorder.

Likewise, individuals who become addicted to Ritalin and Adderall after illegal use may benefit most from inpatient treatment because of the anxiety that stimulant prescriptions can cause. While it is most likely a symptom of the use, it can lead to increased bouts of anxiety attacks and an actual anxiety disorder.

Addiction treatment and detox for Adderall and Ritalin can also be completed as part of outpatient treatment. Clients with mild to moderate stimulant prescription abuse may succeed with outpatient treatment that supports behavioral therapy and mindfulness.

Impact Outpatient Programs

Impact Outpatient Program is an outpatient program that is designed to support individuals ready to battle substance abuse through structured and supportive therapeutic treatment. Our program is designed to provide the support of a residential treatment program with the freedoms of an outpatient program.
Contact us today to see how our Outpatient Program can support you on our journey of recovery.

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