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Why does adderall make me tired

Share on PinterestThe word “psychotropic” usually brings to mind the Grateful Dead’s dancing teddy bears more readily than it makes you think about chugging your morning java. But caffeine is, in fact, a psychotropic drug — which just means it alters your mental state. It’s also the only thing that seems to get us through those sleep-deprived mornings.Caffeine is in coffee, tea, soda, chocolate, and the veins of most exhausted Americans. But as even diehard coffee enthusiasts know, it’s hard to pinpoint the right amount of caffeine. Too little and you’re a cranky, tired mess. Too much and you’re a spastic tornado of heart palpitations and anxiety.Hold on — I need an ADHD refresherEstimates vary, but up to 5 percent of U.S. adults may have ADHD. That’s about 11 million people! What’s more, about 50 percent of them also have some form of anxiety.ADHD is likely caused by structural, chemical, and connectivity differences in the brain resulting from genetics and environmental triggers.It has three main symptoms:Hyperactivity: constant movement, excessive talking and fidgeting, a feeling of intense restlessnessInattention: lack of focus, persistence, and organization due to actual inability, not a lack of will or comprehensionImpulsivity: rapid decision-making with a desire for immediate reward and an inability to understand consequencesADHD symptoms are typically managed with prescription stimulants that target the central nervous system to improve concentration. Like these medications, caffeine is a mild stimulant that can counteract ADHD symptoms.It does so in two ways:It blocks adenosine, a chemical that promotes sleep, and suppresses arousal.It manipulates dopamine production, increasing your concentration and enhancing your overall mood.A quick note on dopamineDopamine is a chemical in your brain that needs to be perfectly balanced for you to focus and stay attentive. In most people, stimulants can cause a surge in dopamine, leading to agitation and anxiety.But in people with ADHD, dopamine levels are low to begin with, so stimulants like caffeine or amphetamines may boost their levels into the productivity zone.A 2011 study focusing on tea supports this, showing that caffeine mimics the effects of stronger ADHD medications.Like other stimulants, caffeine is a vasoconstrictor, which means it reduces blood flow to the brain. That’s why caffeine helps get rid of a headache. For reasons still unknown, reduced blood flow may lessen ADHD symptoms by limiting activity in overactive parts of the brain. Basically, it puts the ADHD-affected part of your brain into chill-out mode so the rest of your brain can cooperate and focus.As good as it sounds, caffeine alone isn’t as effective as ADHD meds for a few reasons:It’s difficult to consume consistent amounts of caffeine and properly measure the dosage.Prescription meds contain higher, controlled doses of stimulants.Consuming caffeine along with ADHD meds can be too stimulating and cause unwanted side effects (more on that in a sec).Caffeine can make sleeping difficult, especially if you already have trouble catching Zzz’s. Sleep deprivation has similar symptoms to ADHD, including:moodinessirritabilitydepressiondifficulty processing informationinability to concentratereduced sex driveincreased appetiteto forgetfulness yawningTry limiting your caffeine consumption to the morning and early afternoon so your body has enough time to get back to normal functioning by bedtime.It’s not everyone’s cuppa teaEven small doses of caffeine or other stimulants may not be your thing. Talk to your doctor before starting a new caffeine regimen. They’ll know about possible side effects based on your overall health and current ADHD treatment.You should avoid caffeine if you:are pregnant or breastfeedinghave a sleep disorder like insomniaare prone to chronic headacheshave anxietyhave irregular heart rhythms, palpitations, or high blood pressureSide effects will depend on how much caffeine you consume and how sensitive you are to it. Over time, you may develop a tolerance for caffeine, so you’ll need to consume more of it to get the same level of benefits.It’s important not to think of caffeine as a cure-all for ADHD.The two main interventions for ADHD are medication and behavioral therapy.The most common ADHD medications include:methylphenidate (Ritalin)amphetamine (Adderall)dextroamphetamine (Dexedrine)When caffeine and amphetamines are combined, their effects become even more potent, an effect known as synergy (basically like Godzilla teaming up with Mothra).You can have too much of a good thingAccording to the FDA, healthy adults can generally consume about 400 milligrams of caffeine (about four cups of coffee) per day without any negative effects. Too much caffeine can cause:feverheadacheirritabilityinsomniaidiarrheacheast painvomitingmuscle spasmsrapid heartbeat or heart palpitationsCombining caffeine and ADHD medication increases their benefits but also increases their potential negative effects, including:anxietyinsomniaindigestive issueshigh blood pressureerapid heart ratefrequent urinationStart with a small amount of caffeine and see how it affects your ADHD symptoms. It might take a little while to find the right dosage for you.Emerging research indicates ADHD often runs in families, but it’s also revealing just how complex ADHD is. For instance, genetic mutations at many different points in the DNA journey may be classified as ADHD. Brain regions may develop at different rates in children with ADHD. All this makes it difficult to pinpoint a cause and even more so to determine the right course of treatment on a case-by-case basis. Adderall is a well-known medication used to treat ADHD that has been on the market since 1996. Years after its initial approval, Shire Pharmaceuticals developed an “extended-release” format of the drug called “Adderall XR.” This format of the drug was launched in 2001 as a means to provide extended relief from attentional-deficits spanning up to 12 hours. Those taking the original version of Adderall (immediate-release) often would end up having to take multiple pills throughout the day due to the fact that the effect only lasted 4 to 6 hours. This complicated treatment, especially for children that would need school nurses to take extra time to administer treatment. Fortunately Adderall XR was a solution that could be used to combat popping an extra Adderall IR tablet. The Adderall XR capsule contains beads with the same active ingredient as Adderall IR, 75% dextroamphetamine and 25% levoamphetamine. The primary difference between the two is that Adderall XR elicits nearly double the duration of effect. Some people claim to tolerate one format than the other, which is likely due to physiological differences in absorption of the beads within the XR compared to the tablet of the IR. Adderall IR vs. XR Comparison Chart Below is a chart created to help you analyze the general similarities and differences between Adderall IR and XR. Adderall IR vs. Adderall XR Adderall IRAdderall XR Generic nameMixed Amphetamine SaltsAmphetamine Salt Combo XR Duration of effect4 to 6 hours. (Shorter-acting)– 12 hours. (Longer-acting) FormatTablet (100% immediate-release)Capsule (50% immediate-release, 50% delayed-release) Dosages5 mg, 7.5 mg, 10 mg, 12.5 mg, 15 mg, 20 mg, 30 mg5 mg, 10 mg, 15 mg, 20 mg, 25 mg, 30 mg Release date19962001 Cost (30 pills)\$158 to \$170\$225 to \$240 Generic cost (30 pills)\$25 to \$40\$75 to \$140 Adderall IR vs. XR: What’s the difference? Due to the fact that both Adderall IR and Adderall XR contain the same active ingredient of 75% dextroamphetamine and 25% levoamphetamine, there theoretically shouldn’t be any significant difference in terms of efficacy. There also shouldn’t be any significant differences in terms of side effects. Whether you respond better to one format of the drug over the other is highly individual – another person may have a completely different response. Adderall IR is manufactured in tablet format, whereas Adderall XR is manufactured in the form of capsules. The capsules of the Adderall XR contain little beads, 50% of which are immediate-release (just like the “IR”) and 50% of which are delayed-release. The total duration of effect provided by Adderall XR is estimated to be approximately 12 hours, whereas that of Adderall IR is between 4 and 6 hours. Abuse potential Both the immediate-release (IR) and extended-release (XR) versions of Adderall are classified as “Schedule II” controlled-substances. This means that they have a high potential for abuse, are habit forming, and may result in dependence. Psychological dependence is most common among Adderall users that come to rely on the drug as a crutch to help them perform better at school/work, function in social settings, or maintain a positive mood. Some may argue that since the “IR” version is in tablet format, it is subject to greater abuse. This may be true due to the fact that snorting Adderall is easier for those seeking a “high” when in tablet form compared to capsule form. Tablets can be easily crushed, whereas those attempting to insufflate the capsules will have a more difficult time emptying and crushing the beads. Without crushing the beads within the capsules, they will not elicit any sort of any effect. From the perspective of insufflation, the tablets likely have a greater propensity for abuse. That said, abuse of either drug can result in high dopamine levels, which may trigger “stimulant psychosis.” For this reason, both Adderall IR and XR are carefully regulated by medical professionals. Cost There are some notable cost differences between Adderall IR and Adderall XR. For 30 pills of the “brand name” immediate-release format of Adderall, you’ll likely end up paying between \$158 and \$170. For 30 “brand name” pills of the extended-release format, most pharmacies will charge between \$225 and \$240. If we’re talking strictly from a “pill count” perspective, “brand name” Adderall IR is a cheaper option. However, since it would require 2 Adderall IRs to elicit the same duration of effect as an Adderall XR, a more accurate comparison may be the cost of 60 IR pills to 30 XR pills. In this case, you’d be looking at well over \$300 for the IR pills, making the XR version more economically feasible. Fortunately both Adderall IR and XR are sold under generic names. Adderall IR can be purchased under the generic “mixed amphetamine salts” for \$25 to \$40 for 30 pills. Adderall XR can be purchased under the generic “amphetamine salt combo XR” – costing \$75 to \$140 for 30 pills. In this case, buying nearly double the generic IR pills (\$50 to \$80) would still be cheaper than just 30 generic XRs. Crashes Most users of Adderall have experienced what is commonly referred to as an Adderall crash. This is a temporary “crash” in terms of both physical and mental energy that occurs when Adderall’s effect wears off. Most people aren’t bothered by these crashes due to the fact that they only take Adderall to help with work and/or school, when they’re finally home, the crash isn’t important. That said, crashes aren’t thought to be more common with the IR compared to the XR or vice-versa. Those taking high doses of the IR may find that they experience a noticeable crash after 4 hours, compared to a noticeable crash after 12 hours as would occur with the XR. Some may find that being medicated for a longer period of time throughout the day with the XR increases the severity and duration of the crash. There will be significant individual differences in regards to whether you experience a crash after your Adderall wears off. Generally the greater the contrast between your “medicated state” and your “non-medicated state,” the more noticeable the crash. Some individuals may resort to taking a combination of the XR, followed by an IR dose so that their only “crash” is a good night’s sleep. Dosage The available dosages for Adderall IR include: 5 mg, 7.5 mg, 10 mg, 12.5 mg, 15 mg, 20 mg, and 30 mg. The dosage options for Adderall XR include: 5 mg, 10 mg, 15 mg, 20 mg, 25 mg, and 30 mg. As you can tell, there are smaller increments between doses of the IR version. Should someone find that 5 mg is too light of a dose, whereas 10 mg is too heavy of a dose, the option of 7.5 mg may prove to be optimal. That said, Adderall XR still is manufactured in six different dosing options, just one shy of the IR version. It provides a 25 mg dose that is not available for Adderall IR and still provides steady increments of 5 mg between dosing formats. Overall, there really isn’t a significant difference between Adderall IR and XR in terms of dosing options. Some may prefer the smaller incremental increases of the IR dosing, while others may like the 25 mg option of the XR. The doses associated with Adderall IR compared to XR can be difficult for some to understand. Taking 10 mg of Adderall XR would be equivalent to taking 5 mg of Adderall IR twice. In other words, a 10 mg Adderall XR would be like taking 2 separate, optimally-timed doses of 5 mg Adderall IR. Duration of effect There are noticeable differences in duration of effect between Adderall IR and XR. Those taking the IR should find that the effect lasts approximately 4 to 6 hours. For some people the effect may seem shorter, while for others it may seem to last the full 6 hours. In general, it is somewhere in the middle – around 5 hours depending on how your body absorbs the tablet. The Adderall XR version was engineered specifically to last up to 12 hours. This means you can take just one of the XRs and you should experience symptomatic reduction for the entire day. Despite differences in duration of effect, a person could easily take 2 Adderall IRs and be covered for up to 12 hours as well. For those that favor convenience and simplicity, taking only one pill of the XR for long-term relief may be preferred. Efficacy Anecdotal reports across the internet will claim that Adderall XR is better than Adderall IR – and vice-versa. This may be somewhat of a placebo effect, but could also be due to absorption differences. Some people may have an easier time absorbing the Adderall IR in tablet format compared to the beads within the capsules of Adderall XR. Assuming your body absorbs one pill better than the other or more smoothly, it could result in a slight difference in terms of efficacy. Delivery of the drug and how it’s processed matters, but just because the IR works better for you, does not mean that it will work better for someone else. That said, since both Adderall IR and XR contain the same ratio of mixed salts, the effect should be nearly identical. Formats Adderall IR is formatted in an immediate-release tablets. This means that as soon as you take the drug, you’ll get the full effect of the drug within 30 to 60 minutes; many people feel it sooner. Adderall XR is formatted in capsule form containing pellets. Within these capsules, 50% of the pellets are immediate-release, and 50% are delayed-release. This means that when you take Adderall XR, you’ll get the same initial kick within 30 to 60 minutes as you would with the IR version. However, you’ll notice that the drug delivers a “second wind” of effect after the immediate-release pellets are fully processed. This “second wind” is from the other delayed-release pellets that haven’t broken down. By comparison, the immediate-release pellets are comprised of a bead in the center of a drug layer, followed by an overcoating. The delayed-release pellets are comprised of a bead in the center of a drug layer, with an overcoating covered in a release-delaying polymer, covered with a second overcoating. This means that as the first immediate-release pellets are “wearing off” the delayed-release pellets are just kicking in. The combination of immediate and delayed release pellets results in a bimodal distribution of effect that could be achieved by simply taking 2 properly-timed immediate-release tablets. For the sake of convenience, many people like the Adderall XR format. However, if you don’t always need a “second wind” after your first 4 to 6 hours, Adderall IR may be preferred. Medical uses Both Adderall IR and XR are approved for the treatment of ADHD and narcolepsy. Those with these conditions may prefer to use one format of Adderall over the other, or may use a combination of both. Some individuals with ADHD may have a supply of both Adderall IR and XR to use based on how much cognitively-demanding work they’ll be doing. Those with long school or work days may opt to take the XR version for 12 hours worth of relief. Individuals that only need to focus for 4 to 6 hours may rather take the IR version and feel less drugged for the remainder of the day. Individuals with narcolepsy may find that Adderall XR doesn’t provide quite as long of relief as they need, and may take an Adderall IR for additional relief when the XR wears off. Off-label uses such as Adderall for depression as an antidepressant augmentation option may benefit more from the XR (extended-release) version due to the fact that it provides long-lasting relief. If 12 hours isn’t enough relief, the IR (immediate-release) may be tacked onto the end of the 12 hours for antidepressant relief until a person falls asleep. Those using Adderall for anxiety may decide that taking the immediate-release version as needed is favorable for preservation of dopamine levels and receptors. Popularity Among those looking to abuse Adderall, the immediate-release format may be slightly more popular. This is due to the fact that it’s far easier to crush up a tablet for insufflation, than it is to crush up the tiny pellets within the extended-release version. That said, there isn’t specific data in regards to whether Adderall IR or XR is the more popular format among general users. Those who wish to attain longer-lasting relief will gravitate towards the XR version, whereas those who need shorter-term relief tend to like the IR version. Some speculate that Adderall XR may be slightly more popular than the IR due to the fact that it is newer and longer-acting. From a general perspective, Adderall (both IR and XR) is regarded as one of the most popular psychostimulants of all time. Side effects Due to the fact that the ingredient composition is the exact same in Adderall IR and XR, the side effects are likely to be the same. Common side effects associated with both versions include: appetite loss, diarrhea, dizziness, dry mouth, fever, headaches, insomnia, nausea, nervousness, stomach pain, vomiting, and weight loss. Slight variations in side effects may be due to differences in absorption of the tablet-formatted IR or the capsule-formatted XR. Withdrawal There may be some differences in severity and duration of withdrawal related to whether you took Adderall IR or XR. Those taking the immediate-release (IR) version may not use the drug as frequently or on an intermittent basis. This intermittent or infrequent usage associated with the immediate-release version may result in less severe Adderall withdrawal symptoms. Those taking the extended-release version (XR) may be medicated more throughout the day, and therefore may have an increasingly difficult time stopping the drug. Furthermore, should you want to “taper” or titrate your dosing downwards, there are bigger jumps in dosing increments of 5 mg with the XR version compared to 2.5 mg increments with the IR version. Unfortunately pellets cannot be “counted” due to the fact that you won’t know which are the immediate versus the delayed release. Adderall IR can be cut with a pill cutter, making it easier to titrate the dosing downwards. Therefore, the immediate-release version may be advantageous in that it is more likely to be used on an intermittent or infrequent basis, the pills can be cut, and the dosing options provide smaller increments for tapering. Similarities between Adderall IR and XR Below is a recap of the similarities between Adderall IR and XR. Mechanism of action: The mechanism of action for Adderall IR and XR is the exact same as they contain the same active ingredients. They both act as dopamine reuptake inhibitors, plus inhibit reuptake of norepinephrine, and trigger the presynaptic release of these neurotransmitters. Medical uses: Both formats of Adderall are used to treat ADHD and narcolepsy. Some patients may prefer one format over the other, but in many cases a combination of both may be utilized. Ingredients: The IR and XR version of Adderall are both comprised of 75% dextroamphetamine and 25% levoamphetamine. Side effects: There should be no significant differences in side effects derived from Adderall IR compared to Adderall XR. Withdrawal: The symptoms associated with discontinuing each drug are likely similar if administered as the same dose. However, those taking the IR may experience less severe withdrawals due to intermittent or less-frequent daily usage that may not last a full 12 hours like the XR. Being medicated for a full 12-hours daily may produce a more substantial withdrawal. That said, if you were taking two Adderall IRs, you’ll likely have the same degree of withdrawal as someone taking one Adderall XR. Differences between Adderall IR and XR Listed below is a recap of the differences between immediate-release and extended-release Adderall. Approval date: Adderall IR was approved in 1996, whereas Adderall XR didn’t hit the market until 2001. Cost: The cost of 30 Adderall IR pills is cheaper than the cost of 30 Adderall XR pills. The cost of 60 Adderall IR pills is more expensive than 30 XR pills; this would be an equivalent. That said, 60 generic Adderall IRs is cheaper than 30 XR pills. Dosages: There are a total of 7 dosing options for Adderall IR and the lower doses increase in 2.5 mg increments. There are a total of 6 dosing options for Adderall XR, all of which increase in 5 mg increments. Duration of effect: The duration of effect for the IR version is 4 to 6 hours, whereas the XR version is thought to last up to 12 hours. Format: The format of Adderall IR is that of a tablet containing mixed amphetamine salts. The format of Adderall IR is that of a capsule containing “pellets” (50% immediate-release and 50% delayed-release). Personal experience with Adderall IR and XR I’ve personally had the experience of using both Adderall IR and XR, and other than the duration of effect, I didn’t notice any significant differences. I preferred the IR version due to the fact that I could take them on an “as-needed” basis without feeling too keyed up for the entire day. Both the IR and XR were helpful in treating my major depression, but at too high of doses, they seemed to induce an overly intense dopaminergic euphoria – which I was trying to avoid. The thing I liked about the IRs is that they could be cut and would provide me with short-term relief rather than sustained, 12 hour relief. After an Adderall XR wore off, I felt as if I was in a trance-like state, dazed, semi-conscious, and ready for bed. When the IR wore off, I didn’t notice as sharp of a transition from feeling drugged to feeling normal. This was likely due to the fact that low doses are available for the IR, and I was taking microdoses of 2.5 mg or 5 mg. The IR pills were easy to split and at low doses seemed to provide me with a clean concentration without the excess buzz experienced at higher doses. The XRs aren’t manufactured in low doses, so I would sometimes just take a few “pellets” or “beads” to avoid getting the full dose – this seemed to work fairly well. Neither the IR or the XR was significantly better than the other, but I prefer the IR. I mostly prefer the IR due to the fact that I don’t need as long of a buzz from the drug. Extended stimulation for 12 hours leads to an extended crash and downregulation of dopamine receptors – something I wanted to avoid. Understand that this is just my personal experience and preference for how I used the drug. Which is better: Adderall IR or XR? Neither version of the drug should be considered superior to the other. Individual preferences for one format over the other are usually due to the duration over which a person needs the psychostimulant effect. If someone needs the drug to work for 12 hours, they’ll probably end up taking the extended-release XR version. Those that only need short-term relief from ADHD symptoms may prefer to take the immediate-release IR version. There’s no significant benefit associated with one version over the other; they both contain 75% dextroamphetamine and 25% levoamphetamine. Assuming you’re taking the same dose, you should get the exact same effect. A hypothesis could be made that the tablets are absorbed differently compared to the capsules. There could be some truth to that hypothesis, but the absorption differences are unlikely to be significant. That said, some may find that in their subjective, anecdotal experience, one version provides a more substantial effect than the other. Which do you prefer? Adderall IR vs. XR If you currently use Adderall (or have used it), did you prefer the IR (immediate-release) format or the XR (extended-release) format? Feel free to share a comment below mentioning whether you found one to be superior to the other in terms of efficacy and what you liked or disliked about each format. If you found no significant difference in effect and don’t have a preference format over the other, let us know.

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