Pointers For Parents

New Medicine for ADHD Helps Manage Symptoms and Avoids Mid-Day Dose

(NAPSA)—Children with Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) may now find relief with a medication they need to take only once a day. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has approved Ritalin® LA (methylphenidate HCl) extended-release capsules for treating ADHD. The once-daily form of the medication eliminates the need for a mid-day dose during school.

According to a recent nationwide survey of children with ADHD, 38 percent of children who were taking medication during the day at school reported that they were embarrassed to take their ADHD medication during school hours. However, Ritalin LA is administered in a single morning dose, therefore, children do not have to interrupt the school day to take their ADHD medication.

"Ritalin LA represents an important advance in the treatment of ADHD," said Thomas Spencer, M.D., Associate Professor of Psychiatry, Harvard Medical School and Assistant Director of the Pediatric Psychopharmacology Research Program at Massachusetts General Hospital. "It provides the rapid onset, and the proven safety and efficacy of Ritalin in one, single morning dose, rather than multiple doses throughout the day."

ADHD is a complicated problem involving the brain's management system, it is a neurobiologic disorder that has been studied for nearly 100 years—and the diagnosis is supported by a substantial body of scientific evidence. Scientific research indicates that ADHD may be related to disturbances in certain chemicals in the brain. Primary symptoms include hyperactivity, inattention and impulsivity. A person with ADHD may demonstrate one, two or all of these symptoms. For an ADHD diagnosis, the symptoms must be present in multiple settings (i.e., at school or at work and at home, etc.) and persist over an extended period of time, making life especially challenging. Without treatment, ADHD can have long-term effects on self-esteem and an individual's ability to succeed in school or at work.

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The FDA granted marketing approval for Ritalin LA based on a clinical trial involving 134 patients, aged 6 to 12 years. Children participating in the study were observed both at home and in school, using rating scales commonly used to measure ADHD symptoms. The result: the medication was found to work better than a placebo (sugar pill) in managing core ADHD symptoms, including inattention and hyperactivity.

Each bead-filled capsule of Ritalin LA provides an immediate release of medication for rapid action, and a second release approximately four hours later, mimicking twice-daily dosing of original Ritalin. It may be swallowed as whole capsules, or, for children who have difficulty swallowing, it may be administered by sprinkling the contents on applesauce.

The medicine is generally recommended as part of a comprehensive treatment regimen including behavior modification and counseling.

Ritalin LA is contraindicated in patients known to be hypersensitive to the drug or to Ritalin, in patients with glaucoma, in patients with motor tics, and in patients with a family history or diagnosis of Tourette's syndrome. In addition, Ritalin LA is contraindicated during treatment with monoamine oxidase inhibitors and should not be taken until at least 14 days after discontinuation of a monoamine oxidase inhibitor.

For complete prescribing information for Ritalin LA see www.pharma.us.novartis.com. For more information about ADHD, see www.ADHDinfo.com.