

## Medication Information

### Clonidine

Clonidine (Catapres) is used to treat high blood pressure. In psychiatry, it is used to reduce physical hyperactivity in children with attention deficit-hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), as a treatment for Tourette's syndrome, and to lessen withdrawal symptoms from drug and alcohol dependence. The usual daily dose is 0.2-0.6 mg.

**Precautions:** If used regularly, sudden discontinuation of Clonidine may increase blood pressure and cause unwanted side effects. This medication may cause drowsiness or dizziness, so do not drive a car or operate machinery until you know how you will be affected. If there is a possibility you may become pregnant or breast feed, consult with your physician. Clonidine should be used with caution if there is a known history of serious heart, or kidney disease.

Drug interactions may occur with the following: barbiturates, tricyclic antidepressants (TCAs), beta-blockers, and calcium channel blockers.

**Common side effects include:** agitation, constipation, dizziness, drowsiness, dry mouth, fatigue, impotence, loss of sex drive, nausea, nervousness, sedation, vomiting, weakness, excessive urination, headache, loss of appetite, depression, pounding heartbeat, and weight gain. Other adverse effects not listed here may occur. Contact your physician if you develop any unusual or disturbing symptoms.

**Alternatives:** Other medications used to treat ADHD include Dexedrine, Ritalin, Strattera, Wellbutrin, Provigil, Effexor, and Tenex. Other medications used to treat Tourette's include Risperdal, beta-blockers, and selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs). Certain "natural" substances (such as L-tyrosine and Gingko Biloba) have been found helpful for improving attention and focus. These are not as well studied, may be manufactured with less quality control than medications, can cause adverse reactions, and are usually less predictably effective than medication. Some children become less hyperactive on a low-sugar diet. Cognitive-behavioral and family psychotherapy are often helpful.