

effects of the medication: appetite loss, abdominal pain, headaches, sleep disturbances, and growth velocity. Stimulants should be avoided in children who have a history of tic-like behaviors, a family history of Tourette syndrome (TS), or ADHD combined with TS, because these medications may exaggerate tics.

Other medications, including tricyclic antidepressants and extended-release clonidine, may be used as adjunct therapy for ADHD, primarily for children with coexisting conditions, such as sleep disturbances ([American Academy of Pediatrics, 2011a](#)).

It is important to remember that these medications are not prescribed based on the child's weight (except atomoxetine), but on resolution of the symptoms; therefore it is important to follow the child closely and evaluate for therapeutic effects as well as potential side effects. Regularly scheduled reevaluation of the child is essential with all of these medications to determine medication effectiveness, detect and evaluate any side effects, monitor development and health status (especially growth and blood pressure), and assess family interaction (see [Critical Thinking Case Study](#) box).

Critical Thinking Case Study

Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder

Johnnie, an 8-year-old third grader, was recently diagnosed with ADHD. He has been taking the drug methylphenidate (Ritalin) for about 1 month. In the short time that Johnnie has been taking this medication, his math teacher has noticed an improvement in his performance in math class. He is receiving a grade of B instead of his previous grades of D on most math quizzes. The math teacher has also noted that Johnnie is socializing more with his classmates and that he now has a “best friend” in math class. Johnnie usually receives his methylphenidate from the school nurse before lunch. Yesterday Johnnie's mother told the school nurse that he has not eaten his lunch for the past week and that he is not hungry.

What important issues regarding Johnnie's medication should the nurse consider in her discussions with Johnnie's mother?

Questions