How do I get my Stimulant Medication Prescription at UVA Student Health?

Stimulant medications are used to treat a variety of disorders, including attention deficit / hyperactivity disorder (ADD / ADHD). Many UVA students have been diagnosed with one of these conditions prior to arriving at UVA, and others are diagnosed while here at school. Here are some tips for obtaining your prescriptions for stimulant medications for conditions requiring them.

If you’ve received stimulant medication prior to coming to UVA:

1. Contact your doctor who initially prescribed your stimulant medication to see if they’ll continue to provide prescriptions while you’re at school. You’ll likely need to arrange follow up appointments intermittently throughout the year (during Fall Break, Thanksgiving, Winter Break, and Spring Break) for your doctor to continue to prescribe your stimulant medication.

2. If your home physician plans to continue providing prescriptions, you’ll either need to drop off the actual prescription at a Charlottesville pharmacy (UVA Student Health pharmacy fills prescriptions from home physicians) or have your parents fill the prescription back at home and have them ship it to you. Many of the stimulant medication prescriptions are in a category that prevents doctors from calling in the prescription from home.

If you’d like to transfer care to a local physician or you are newly diagnosed with ADD / ADHD while at UVA:

1. Contact CAPS (924-5556) for recommendations for an appointment with a psychiatrist locally. You may be referred to a community psychiatrist who can provide follow up and prescriptions.

2. Stimulant prescriptions are not provided by General Medicine, LNEC or Gynecology clinicians at UVA Student Health.

New Required Screening Process for Assessing Risk of Sudden Death from Stimulant Prescriptions:

**Background:** In May 2008, the American Academy of Pediatrics developed recommendations for **cardiac screening of all patients** (screening form) under consideration for or currently being treated with stimulant medications. Though there is no specific link known between stimulant medications and sudden death, 19 out of 2.5 million young people taking stimulants died over a 5 year period. The frequency of sudden unexpected death among those taking stimulants is no higher than in the general population of children. However, theoretically those with underlying heart abnormalities or high blood pressure could be at even higher risk on stimulant medications due to elevation of blood pressure and/or heart rate, though there is no data to support this theory.
UVA Student Health Center has adopted a cautious approach in following these recommendations as the new standard of medical care to require students to undergo screening at the time we initiate or take over prescribing stimulant medications.

1. Prior to your UVA Student Health CAPS initial appointment for stimulant prescriptions, you are required to complete a “Cardiovascular Screening for Stimulant Medications” questionnaire, including answering 6 questions. You will then need a primary care physician or Student Health General Medicine physician to perform an exam and sign off on the screening process. The questionnaire is available on our website at www.virginia.edu/studenthealth/StimulantMedicationScreen.

2. The cardiovascular screening assessment for risk of stimulant medication includes a review of known history of a heart condition; symptoms of a heart condition including palpitations, passing out, or seizures; review for family history of sudden death at a young age or known hypertrophic cardiomyopathy or long QT syndrome; and a thorough heart exam including blood pressure.

3. You can schedule an elective appointment in General Medicine, typically available within 3 days, by calling 982-3915.

4. Once you have completed the initial screening, subsequent screenings should occur yearly, unless there is a change in your heart history or family history that indicates a need for follow up screening sooner. You are obliged to inform your prescribing physician if there has been a change in your or your family’s history that would put you at increased risk of potential heart complications.

5. If you’ve already been under the care of a CAPS psychiatrist before September 2008, you will need to complete the same initial screening process in order to continue receiving prescription stimulant medication in CAPS. The CAPS psychiatrists may only provide a limited supply of ongoing medication to those continuing treatment while the screening process is being completed.

6. You must have a physician sign off on the screening questionnaire, indicating that you are thought to be at no increased risk for sudden cardiac death with the addition of the stimulant medication compared to the general population.

7. If the screening physician discovers an issue that raises concern for cardiac risk from stimulant medication prescription, you may require further testing or specialty input to assess cardiovascular risk from stimulant medication before a prescription will be issued.

8. If you are at increased risk of sudden death, you will need to be fully informed of this risk to make a reasonable decision in discussion with your doctors on how to proceed.

9. You must provide a completed and signed questionnaire to your prescribing clinician before new or continuing prescriptions for stimulant medication are issued initially and thereafter yearly at a minimum.

10. If you plan to fill a prescription for stimulant medication from a physician outside of UVA Student Health, that physician or your primary care doctor will need to complete a Cardiovascular Screening for Stimulant Medications form and fax it back to UVA Student Health Pharmacy at 434-243-0182.