

MU Health Care Pharmacy Services
1 Hospital Dr, Columbia
MO 65212

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CONTACT: Tierney Kugel
tekcgq@umsystem.edu
203-434-2604

Columbia pharmacies continue to be affected by nation-wide ADHD drug shortage

COLUMBIA, Mo. The nation-wide Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) medication shortage that began in 2022 continues to affect local pharmacies and limit students' access to their prescriptions, with no indication that the shortage will improve in the future.

In 2022, the Food and Drug Administration announced that there was a shortage of Adderall. Since then, access to other ADHD medications, including Focalin, Ritalin, Vyvanse and Concerta, has also become limited.

"There usually are issues getting those medications in. Sometimes they're on backorder, sometimes they're not. They are definitely ones that are more difficult to get in," Monica Arnold, a Pharmacy Technician for MU Healthcare Pharmacy Services, said.

A year after the ADHD medication shortage began in October 2022, the U.S. FDA published a letter linking the problem to record-high prescription rates and a lack of control over manufacturers. According to a study published by [JAMA Psychiatry](#), ADHD prescriptions increased more than 14% in the last two years.

The FDA and Drug Enforcement Administration do not have the power to require a pharmaceutical company to [increase the quantity of a drug](#) and insist that the manufacturers have not yet met their quotas.

Pharmacies across Missouri, including those in Springfield, Kansas City and Columbia, have struggled to stock this medication, leaving students who have ADHD with limited options.

"A lot of students who are on these medications are actually using it for studying and performing well in classes," Arnold said. "Having access to these medications can be crucial to students in their overall academic performance and doing well in class."

ADHD showcases a variety of symptoms, including an inability to focus, mood swings, impulsivity and disorganization. ADHD medications relieve these symptoms for many by targeting the brain chemicals dopamine and norepinephrine to improve concentration.

“It's so well known that they are difficult to get a hold of that people aren't really that angry about it. All we can really do is call around and see which pharmacies have the medications available,” Arnold said. “I think it's pretty well understood that these medications are hard to get a hold of so people generally aren't too angry.”

The shortage puts a strain on students who are not able to access their medication. According to [WebMD](#), up to 5% of American adults have ADHD and 6 million new prescriptions for stimulants were written between 2020 and 2022.

“I hear students complain that they can't get their Vyvanse, they can't get their Adderall, for example. All we can do is recommend that they speak to other pharmacies or their doctor. I do recommend you always look up to see if you have a copay card or free trial card to bring down the costs of your medications,” Arnold said.

For MU students, further resources are available, including referrals for ADHD testing and [medication management services](#). Through the [Student Health Center](#), MU primary care providers assess, prescribe and manage ADHD medications for students.

MU Health Care provides medical services to patients across mid-Missouri. MU Health Care operates many facilities including, seven hospitals, more than 50 outpatient clinics, three hospital pharmacies and nine outpatient pharmacies. The next generation of healthcare workers receive training through MU's healthcare system under the guidance of health care professionals while maintaining a patient-centered care.



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Columbia pharmacies continue to be affected by ADHD drug shortage



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muhealth Pharmacies across Missouri continue to be affected by the ADHD medication shortage. Although ADHD medications such as Focalin, Ritalin, Vyvanse and Concerta are on backorder at many pharmacies, the Student Health Center offers medication management services for MU students.