



Understanding Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

What are the symptoms of ADHD?

ADHD is frequently first diagnosed in childhood. Children with ADHD may have trouble paying attention, controlling impulsive behaviors (may act without thinking about what the result will be), or be overly active.¹

Your child may have one or many of these symptoms²:

- fails to notice details
- makes careless mistakes
- has trouble organizing and finishing tasks
- doesn't seem to be listening when spoken to
- fails to finish class work and homework
- avoids tasks that require mental effort over long periods of time
- loses school supplies
- easily distracted
- forgetful in daily activities
- fidgets or squirms in seat
- leaves seat and runs about
- unable to play quietly
- talks incessantly
- blurts out answers
- seems "on the go"
- has difficulty waiting their turn
- interrupts or intrudes on others

If your child has any of the symptoms of ADHD, there are treatment options you can discuss with your healthcare provider.

Will my child outgrow ADHD?

For most people with ADHD, it continues into adulthood. However, by developing their strengths, structuring their environments, and using medication when needed, adults with ADHD can help manage their ADHD symptoms.^{3,4}

Why do so many children have ADHD?

The number of children who are being treated for ADHD has risen. It is not clear whether more children have ADHD or more children are being diagnosed with ADHD, but it is now one of the most common and most studied pediatric conditions. Due to greater awareness and better ways of diagnosing and treating this disorder, more children are being helped.⁵

Is there a cure for ADHD?

As of now, there is no cure for ADHD. The proper medication and treatment plan can help manage the symptoms, but may not alleviate them altogether. Other treatment approaches may include cognitive-behavioral therapy, social skills training, parent education, and modifications to the child's education program.⁴

What causes ADHD?

ADHD frequently runs in families. A child with ADHD has a 1 in 4 chance of having a parent with ADHD. Research to date has shown ADHD may be caused by a number of different factors. However, there is no evidence that ADHD is caused by sugar consumption, food additives, allergies, or immunizations.⁵

Write in more questions to ask your healthcare provider:

Tips to help your child with ADHD

The tips listed below are not all of the ways you can help your child. Talk to your healthcare provider about the best treatment approach for your child before implementing any of these tips.



Create a plan with your healthcare provider

Medication may be helpful to control symptoms of ADHD. Your healthcare provider may also suggest other or additional therapies, social skills training, and modifications to educational plans. It is important to follow all treatment plans with your healthcare provider, including adjusting the dose or changing the medication.⁶



Stay in contact with your child's teacher

Communication with your child's teachers is very important to build consistency and learn which strategies are effective. Ask them what language and techniques are successful, then implement the same practices around the house. You may also want to request a weekly report on your child's behavior, and how ADHD symptoms may be affecting their progress.



Provide helpful reminders

Charts and checklists can help track progress on homework and chores. Keep instructions brief and offer frequent, friendly reminders.⁶



Maintain predictable routines

Changes are a part of life, but people with ADHD can benefit from maintaining regular routines. Try a wall calendar to track daily and coming events. Discuss changes well in advance, so that there are fewer surprises.⁶



Set small, achievable goals

Break things down into clear goals that have specific time periods. Help your child learn to make good decisions by providing only 2 or 3 options at a time. It can also help to build in regular breaks.⁶



Reward positive behavior

Offer kind words, hugs, or small prizes for reaching goals in a timely manner or for good behavior. Praise and reward your child's efforts to pay attention.⁶



More resources

American Academy of Pediatrics
www.healthychildren.com/adhd

Children and Adults with ADHD
www.chadd.org



For more information about ADHD, talk to your healthcare provider.

References: 1. Attention-Deficit / Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) What is ADHD? Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Website. <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/adhd/facts.html>. Page last reviewed April 8, 2020. Accessed April 27, 2020 2. Understanding ADHD: Information for Parents. American Academy of Pediatrics Web site. <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/adhd/Pages/Understanding-ADHD.aspx>. Updated Sept 25, 2019. Accessed April 27, 2020. 3. Treatment & Target Outcomes for Children with ADHD. American Academy of Pediatrics Web site. <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/adhd/Pages/Treatment-of-ADHD-and-Related-Disorders.aspx> Updated Sept 25, 2019. Accessed April 27, 2020. 4. ADHD Parent Medication Guide. American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry Web site. https://www.aacap.org/App_Themes/AACAP/Docs/resource_centers/adhd/adhd_parents_medication_guide_201305.pdf. Updated July 2013. Accessed April 27, 2020. 5. Causes of ADHD. American Academy of Pediatrics Web site. <http://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/adhd/pages/Causes-of-ADHD.aspx>. Updated Sept 2019. Accessed April 27, 2020. 6. Treatment of ADHD. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Web site. <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/adhd/treatment.html>. Updated Oct 2019. Accessed April 27, 2020.