

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is a medical condition. A person with ADHD has differences in brain development and brain activity.

People with ADHD have challenges with inattention, hyperactivity, and impulsivity. **The 2 main symptoms of ADHD are inattention and hyperactivity-impulsivity.**



Inattention

- Poor attention to detail
- Paying attention is hard
- Does not seem to listen
- Often fails to complete tasks
- Organization is hard
- Does not like tasks that take a lot of focus
- Easily loses things
- Easily distracted
- Forgetful of tasks you need or must do

Hyperactivity-Impulsivity

- Fidgets a lot: Staying still is hard
- Runs around, climbs a lot, or feels restless
- Quiet activities are hard
- Often seems on the go. Not comfortable sitting for a long time
- Talks a lot
- Blurts out answers or opinions
- Waiting or taking turns is hard
- Interrupts others

These symptoms can be common for many children and adults. They may also be symptoms of a different medical problem.

Some people only have symptoms of inattention. Others only have symptoms of hyperactivity-impulsivity. Some people have both.

You may have ADHD if several of these symptoms are:

- Chronic: at least six months
- Present from a young age: before age 12
- In different areas of life: problems at home, school or work



Knowing if You Have ADHD

There is no one test for ADHD. A full set of tests by a professional is needed. The tests often include symptom checklists, rating scales, and achievement testing.

Feedback from people in your life is also helpful including, parents, friends or teachers.

About 5 percent of children ages 4 to 17 and about 4 percent of adults have ADHD. Some children out-grow ADHD.

Up to 70 percent will still have symptoms as adults. Hyperactivity often lessens with age.



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Symptoms of ADHD in Adults

Symptoms in adults may be harder to see than symptoms in children. The most common symptoms include restlessness, impulsivity, and difficulty paying attention.

Other symptoms include:

- Difficulty focusing
- Forgetful
- Mood swings
- Poor time management
- Hard to control emotions and motivation
- Risk-taking behavior
- Low self-esteem
- Job problems
- Changes in work performance
- Relationship problems
- Anxiety and depression
- Making quick decisions

Treatment for ADHD: Medication and Counseling

ADHD treatment is different for each patient. Different treatments are often combined.

Medications: Stimulant medication can be helpful. This includes Ritalin, Concerta, Adderall, Dexedrine, or Strattera. The effects are often felt within 30 to 60 minutes of taking the drug.

Counseling and Psychotherapy: Counseling and psychotherapy may help with the difficulties from ADHD in everyday life. One effective kind of counseling for ADHD is Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CBT). Counseling can help provide ideas and skills to help with time management and organization.

Treatment for ADHD: Behavior Changes

Behavioral modification (B-Mod) is an important part of ADHD treatment and management. It is a process of learning skills to change habits and problem areas.

For B-Mod to work, you must keep up with and work to reach your goals. Change takes time, so do not give up.

A realistic organization plan can be very helpful.

Try using a planner, wearing a watch, and having a set daily routine.

Setting up reminders for things like bills and payments due may help manage money. Using online banking may also help by giving easy access to your accounts and having less paper clutter.

Organized spaces can help increase productivity and lessen stress and anxiety.



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Treatment for ADHD: Behavior Changes

It may be useful to make changes at school or work. These may include:

School

- More time to take tests and distraction-free rooms
- Note takers and audio-books
- Priority registration



Work

- Devices or software to help with planning and time management.
- Quiet, distraction-free work environment
- Performance reviews more often

Treatment for ADHD: ADHD Coaching

ADHD coaching helps patients with everyday tasks made harder by ADHD symptoms. ADHD coaches are trained professionals who help patients do this.

ADHD coaches can help patients develop:

- Time management skills
- Goal setting skills
- Organizing skills
- Planning and making appointments
- Self-motivation
- Impulse control (can control your own behavior)
- Stress management
- Self-esteem and confidence

ADHD coaching works best for patients who know they need help and are ready to make a change. It may be very helpful for students looking for help to focus on assignments.

The following resources may be useful for finding an ADHD coach:

- Work Smart Coaching: <https://www.worksmartcoaching.com/>
- Guiding Behavior: <https://www.guidingbehavior.com/coaching/adhd-support>
- Paparo ADHD Coach: <https://www.paparo-adhdcoach.com/>
- ADDvisor: <http://www.addvisor.com/>

ADHD Resources

More Information: Books and Magazines

Children and Adolescents:

- Putting on the brakes: Young people's guide to understanding Attention-deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder by Quinn & Stern (2001)
- Learning to slow down and pay attention: A book for kids about ADHD by Nadeau, Nixon, and Beyl (2004)
- A Bird's-Eye View of Life with ADD and ADHD: Advice from Young Survivors by Ziegler Dendy, and Ziegler (2003)



Parents:

- Taking charge of ADHD: The complete, authoritative guide for parents by Barkley (2000)
- Your defiant child: Eight steps to better behavior by Barkley and Benton (1998)

Adults:

- Taking charge of adult ADHD: Proven strategies to succeed at work, at home, and in relationships by Barkley (1st edition 2010; 2nd edition 2021)
- You mean I'm not lazy, stupid, or crazy: A self-help book for adults with attention deficit disorder by Kelly and Ramundo (1995)
- Driven to distraction: Recognizing and Coping with Attention Deficit Disorder from Childhood Through Adulthood by Hallowell and Ratey (1995)
- ADDitude Magazine

More Information: Online and Phone Apps

Websites

- Virtual Support Group: <https://add.org/adda-virtual-programs/>
- Teens Health: <https://www.kidshealth.org/en/teens/adhd.html>
- Teens with ADHD by Chris Dendy: <https://www.chrisdendy.com/resources-and-tips>
- Children and Adults with Attention-deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder: www.chadd.org

Apps and Tools

- Insight Timer: Free meditation app
- Forest: Popular productivity app
- Stay Focused: Extension for Google Chrome that limits how much time you spend on certain websites

