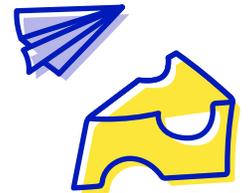


ADHD



ADHD

Section 1: Overview

ADHD is a medical condition that affects brain development and brain activity. ADHD can affect a child at school, at home, and in friendships.

While ADHD is believed to be hereditary, effectively managing your child's symptoms can affect both the severity of the disorder and development of more serious problems over time. Early intervention holds the key to positive outcomes for your child. The earlier you address your child's problems, the more likely you will be able to prevent school and social failure and associated problems such as underachievement and poor self-esteem that may lead to delinquency or drug and alcohol abuse. Although life with your child may at times seem challenging, as a parent you can help create home and school environments that improve your child's chances for success.

Section 2: What is ADHD?

ADHD stands for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. It is a medical condition. A person with ADHD has differences in brain development and brain activity that affect attention, the ability to sit still, and self-control. ADHD can affect a child at school, at home, and in friendships.

All kids struggle at times to pay attention, listen and follow directions, sit still, or wait their turn. But for kids with ADHD, the struggles are harder and happen more often. Attention, activity, and self-control develop little by little, as children grow. It's normal for little kids to be distractible, restless, impatient, or impulsive — these things don't always mean that a child has ADHD. However, kids learn these skills with help from parents and teachers. But some kids don't get much better at paying attention, settling down, listening, or waiting. When these things continue and begin to cause problems at school, home, and with friends, it may be ADHD.

SIGNS OF ADHD



Inattentiveness

- trouble focusing
- trouble listening
- miss important details
- trouble completing tasks
- daydream too much
- forgetful
- lose their things

Hyperactivity

- fidgety and restless
- easily bored
- trouble staying quiet
- rush through things and make careless mistakes
- climb, jump, or roughhouse
- accidentally disrupt others

Impulsiveness

- interrupt
- push or grab
- hard time waiting
- forget to ask for permission
- act before thinking
- take things that aren't theirs
- intense emotional reactions



How Is ADHD Diagnosed?

If you think your child has ADHD, make an appointment with your child's doctor. They will give your child a check-up, including vision and hearing, to be sure something else isn't causing the symptoms. The doctor will gather information about the child's health, behavior, and activity.



Doctors diagnose ADHD if it's clear that:

- A child's distractibility, hyperactivity, or impulsivity doesn't align with their age.
- The behaviors have been going on since the child was young.
- Distractibility, hyperactivity, and impulsivity affect the child at school and at home.
- A health check shows that another health or learning issue isn't causing the problems.

Many kids with ADHD also have learning problems, oppositional and defiant behaviors, or mood and anxiety problems. Doctors usually treat these along with the ADHD.

How Is ADHD Treated?

When ADHD is not treated, it can be hard for kids to succeed. This may lead to low self-esteem, depression, oppositional behavior, school failure, risk-taking behavior, or family conflict. It is important to find the right medicine and treatment!



Treatment for ADHD usually includes:

- **Medicine.** This activates the brain's ability to pay attention, slow down, and use more self-control.
- **Behavior therapy.** Therapists can help kids develop the social, emotional, and planning skills.
- **Parent coaching.** Parents can learn the best ways to respond to behavior difficulties.
- **School support.** Teachers can help kids with ADHD do well and enjoy school more.



COPING STRATEGIES

Use tools to stay organized.

Write everything down in one place. Keep track of assignments, appointments, and schedules in a planner, notebook, or app.



Stick to a schedule.

Set phone alarms and reminders to help you stay on track. This will help you manage your time better and get more sleep.



Practice relaxation and meditation.

This can help people train to focus better and lower stress reactions too.



Get plenty of exercise.

Exercise can help people who have ADHD. If you feel hyper during school, talk to a teacher about taking activity breaks. Take activity breaks often while studying or doing homework to help increase focus.



Take pride in the things that you excel in.

Having ADHD is just one part of you. Make time to do things you enjoy, and develop your interests and talents.



Section 3: ADHD & School

Learn all you can about ADHD and your child's educational rights. The more knowledge you have about your child's rights to the better to maximize his or her success. Each state has a parent technical assistance center that can help you learn more about your child's rights.

Some schools give students with ADHD extra time to take tests. Some students benefit from smaller class sizes. Others need tutoring help. Your teacher can help you plan what's right for you. Even with ideal interventions in place, most children will continue to struggle at times.

How can you help?

Understanding your child's strengths and weaknesses and how ADHD affects them will help in developing an appropriate and effective program for your child, helping them to succeed in school.

- **Become an effective case manager.** Keep a record of all information about your child. This includes copies of all report cards, teacher notes, disciplinary reports, evaluations, notes from any meetings concerning your child, prior treatments, placements, and contact information for those who have worked with your child.
- **Form a team.** This should include the school counselor, the classroom teacher, coach, doctor, and anyone else who you feel understands your child's needs and will help support your child.
- **Become your child's best advocate in both academic and behavioral matters.** Be an active part in services and placements your child receives in an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or Section 504 plan.
- **Communicate regularly.** Having open lines of communication between you and the school will help your child. Invite the teachers to contact you with any concerns before they become a problem.



DID YOU KNOW?

Children with ADHD are protected under the disabilities laws.

- **IDEA** (Disabilities Education Act) is a federal law that governs all U.S. special education services.
- **Section 504** is a civil rights statute protecting children with disabilities in school.
- **IEP** (Individualized Education Program), is legal document that's developed for each child who is eligible for special education.

CLASSROOM TIPS

- Sit in the front of class to limit distractions.
- Color coding notebooks and subjects can be a big help.
- Take breaks if you are overwhelmed.
- Talk with your teacher about your ADHD.
- Let your teacher know when you are struggling.
- Turn off your phone when doing homework.

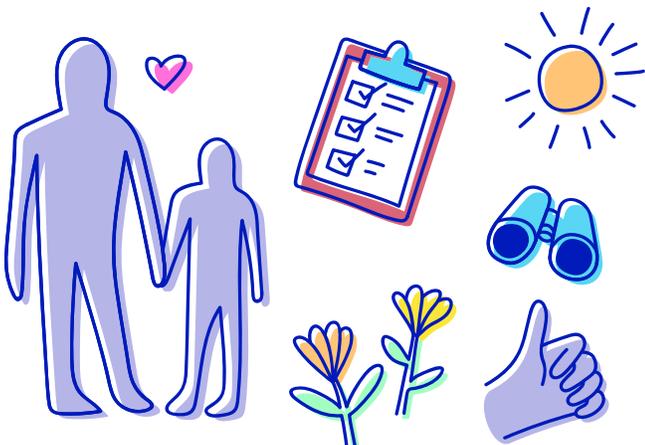


Section 4: ADHD & Home

Dealing with ADHD can be frustrating, even overwhelming for the child, and the parents. Parents can help their child overcome daily challenges, channel their energy into positive arenas, and bring greater calm to your family.



- **Provide clear, consistent expectations, directions and limits.** Children with ADHD need to know exactly what others expect from them.
- **Maintain realistic goals.** Expecting too much from your child, or from yourself as a parent, isn't fair to either of you.
- **Set up an effective discipline system.** Parents should learn proactive—not reactive—discipline methods that teach and reward appropriate behavior and respond to misbehavior with alternatives such as time outs or loss of privileges.
- **Let your child make some mistakes.** To learn responsibility, there must be accountability. They can learn from the natural consequences that result from their behavior.
- **Monitor your child.** Most children with ADHD need frequent monitoring and supervision.
- **Minimize guilt and fear.** ADHD is a biological condition. It's no one's fault. Feeling guilty or worrying excessively leads to trying to do too much. Take a breath, relax, and remind yourself everything will be okay.



POSITIVE & SUPPORTIVE



Constant negative feedback can erode a child's self-esteem.

- **Notice your child's successes, no matter how small.** Tell your child exactly what they did well. This can improve your child's self-esteem and teach them to notice gradual improvements. 
- **Set aside a daily special time for you and your child.** Whether it's an outing, playing games or just time spent with your child in positive interaction, can help fortify your child against assaults to self-worth. 
- **Tell your child that you love and support him/her unconditionally.** Let your child know that you will get through both the smooth and rough times together. 
- **Assist your child with social skills.** Children with ADHD may be rejected by peers because of hyperactive, impulsive or aggressive behaviors. Parent training can help you learn how to assist your child in making friends and learning to work cooperatively with others. 
- **Identify your child's strengths.** Many children with ADHD have strengths in certain areas such as art, athletics, computers or mechanical ability. Build upon these strengths, so that your child will have a sense of pride and accomplishment. 