

ADHD—What is Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder?

Almost all children can experience times of decreased attention and/or increased activity. However, for some children, decreased attention and/or increased activity is more than an occasional problem. Read on for information from the American Academy of Pediatrics about attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

What is ADHD?

ADHD is a condition of the brain that makes it difficult for children to manage their attention, activity, and impulses. It is one of the most common chronic conditions of childhood. It affects 6% to 12% of school-aged children. ADHD is diagnosed about 3 times more often in boys than in girls (who more frequently have the inattentive type that goes unnoticed). The condition affects children in specific ways.

Children with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) have neurobehavioral problems that can interfere with their daily lives. An impulsive nature may put them into physical danger. Children with ADHD may speed about in constant motion, make noise nonstop, refuse to wait their turn, or crash into things. At other times, they may drift as if in a daydream, be unable to pay attention, or be unable to or finish what they start because they are paying attention to another thought or something they see. Those who have trouble paying attention may have trouble learning. Keep in mind that not all children with ADHD have all the symptoms. Each child is unique. For example, some may only have problems paying attention, while others may have problems with both attention and activity.

Recognition is important as early as possible to help minimize or prevent serious, lifelong problems, such as difficulty in school, at home, or at work and/or difficulty in making and keeping friends. Children with ADHD may have trouble getting along with siblings and other children. They may be labeled “bad kids.”

If your child has ADHD, effective treatment is available. Your child’s doctor can offer a long-term treatment plan to help your child lead a happy and healthy life. As a parent, you have a very important role in this treatment.

Visit HealthyChildren.org for more information.

Resources

American Academy of Pediatrics

www.AAP.org and www.HealthyChildren.org

Here is a list of ADHD support groups and resources. Also, your child’s doctor may know about specific resources in your community.

ADDA (Attention Deficit Disorder Association)

www.add.org

CHADD (Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder)—The National Resource Center on ADHD

800/233-4050

www.chadd.org

Center for Parent Information and Resources

www.parentcenterhub.org

National Institute of Mental Health

866/615-6464 www.nimh.nih.gov

Tourette Association of America

888/4-TOURET (486-8738)

www.tourette.org

From Your Doctor

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) is an organization of 67,000 primary care pediatricians, pediatric medical subspecialists, and pediatric surgical specialists dedicated to the health, safety, and well-being of infants, children, adolescents, and young adults.

Adapted from the American Academy of Pediatrics patient education booklet, *Understanding ADHD: Information for Parents About Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder*. Any websites, brand names, products, or manufacturers are mentioned for informational and identification purposes only and do not imply an endorsement by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). The AAP is not responsible for the content of external resources. Information was current at the time of publication. The information contained in this publication should not be used as a substitute for the medical care and advice of your pediatrician. There may be variations in treatment that your pediatrician may recommend based on individual facts and circumstances.

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