

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) / Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD)

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) also known as Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) is a condition in which a person has trouble sustaining attention and focusing on tasks; they may tend to act without thinking and have trouble sitting still.

It usually begins in early childhood and can continue into adulthood. An individual with ADHD finds it much more difficult to focus on something without being distracted. In other words, a person with ADHD is much more impulsive and restless. Without treatment, ADHD can cause problems at home, at school, at work, and with relationships.

Types of ADHD

There are three types of ADHD. They are defined according to the symptoms that present most often.

ADHD – Predominantly Inattentive Type

The person finds it very difficult to organize or finish a task. They find it hard to pay attention to details and find it difficult to follow instructions or conversations.

ADHD – Predominantly Hyperactive-Impulsive Type

The person finds it hard to keep still – they fidget and talk a lot. A smaller child may be continually jumping, running or

climbing. They are restless and impulsive – interrupting others, grabbing things and speaking at inappropriate times. They have difficulty waiting their turn and find it hard to listen to directions.

A person with this type of ADHD may have more injuries and/or accidents than other children.

ADHD – Combined Type

A person who has a combination of Inattentive and Hyperactive-Impulsive symptoms and whose symptoms are equally predominant would be said to have the Combined type.

Signs and Symptoms of ADHD

- restlessness, overactive, fidgety
- constant talking, continuously interrupting people
- not able to concentrate for long on specific tasks
- inattentive, often misses details or parts of a conversation

It is important to note that the signs of ADHD are common in all children at some times of life and do not mean the child has ADHD. It is when these signs become significantly more pronounced in one child, compared to other children of the same age, and when their behaviour undermines school and social life, that the child may have ADHD.

An ADHD diagnosis has to be carried out by a specialist – a psychologist, pediatrician or psychiatrist.

ADHD Treatment

The first step is an accurate diagnosis of ADHD and an understanding of your child's strengths and weaknesses. Learning about ADHD will help you and your child's siblings better understand how to help your child. Treatment of ADHD is

usually a combination of [behaviour therapy](#) and medication.

Treatment with medication will depend on the age of your child. Research has shown that cognitive behavioural therapy for children produces effects that are equal to some doses of medication. Data suggests that behaviour therapy combined with lower doses of medication provides a better outcome than stimulant medication or behavioural therapies alone.