

# Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder



## What is ADHD?

- ADHD is a chronic, neurobiological condition that generally presents in childhood and may persist into adulthood.
- There is no clear cause of ADHD, but biological and environmental factors both likely contribute to its development.
- Approximately 3-5% of children in the U.S. are diagnosed with ADHD.
- ADHD is 3-6 times more common in boys than girls.
- Symptoms of ADHD fall into three categories and interfere with daily functioning in a minimum of two settings (i.e., home and school):

### Inattention

- Forgetful in daily activities
- Easily distracted
- Difficulty organizing tasks
- Difficulty sustaining attention
- Making careless mistakes

### Hyperactivity

- Fidgeting or squirming when seated
- Talking excessively
- Appearing as if “on the go”
- Difficulty playing or engaging in quiet activities

### Impulsive Behavior

- Blurting answers in class
- Interrupting conversations
- Making decisions before evaluating outcomes
- Difficulty waiting his/her turn

## Does my child have ADHD?

Health care providers, such as psychiatrists, psychologists, pediatricians, and other allied health professionals can diagnose ADHD using guidelines set forth in the American Psychiatric Association’s Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition (DSM-5).

Diagnosis generally requires an interview with parents about the child’s medical, family, and school history, and obtaining collateral information from teachers or other professionals who have observed the child’s behavior. Rating scales completed by parents, the child, and teachers can also be helpful in acquiring more information for diagnosis.

## What are treatment options for my child?

Research generally supports a combination of medication to manage symptoms of ADHD, and behavioral therapy, including parent training, to teach you and your child strategies to modify behavior. A psychoeducational evaluation might also be recommended to assess for other learning disabilities and to assist with treatment planning and school accommodations.

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## How can I help my child?



### Helpful Tips

#### ✓ Establish routines

- Maintaining a consistent schedule can help your child know what to expect and get him/her in the habit of completing daily tasks.

#### ✓ Manage distractions

- Limiting extra noise and stimulation and providing your child with a clean workspace can help increase your child's focus on tasks.

#### ✓ Set clear goals

- Wording instructions using clear and simple language ensures that your child knows and understands what is expected of him/her.

#### ✓ Limit choices

- Offering only two choices at a time can prevent your child from feeling overwhelmed and provide him/her with a sense of control.

#### ✓ Reward positive behavior and effort

- Providing praise and rewards for good behavior will optimize motivation, self-confidence, and future compliance.

#### ✓ Break down tasks and incorporate breaks

- Breaking down complex tasks into small parts and providing breaks can reduce frustration and help tasks feel manageable.

## Who do I contact to find out more?

Referrals for behavioral therapy, testing, and medication management are often made by school personnel, physicians, mental health professionals, other allied health professionals, or from a child's parents directly. If interested, please contact us as listed below.

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