

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

What is Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)? – ADHD is one of the most common mental disorders that develop in children. Children with ADHD have impaired functioning in multiple settings, including home, school, and in relationships with peers. If untreated, the disorder can have long-term adverse effects into adolescence and adulthood. For more information about ADHD visit: www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/attention-deficit-hyperactivity-disorder/what-is-attention-deficit-hyperactivity-disorder.shtml

Signs & Symptoms – Symptoms of ADHD will appear over the course of many months, and include:

- Impulsiveness: a child who acts quickly without thinking first.
- Hyperactivity: a child who can't sit still, walks, runs, or climbs around when others are seated, talks when others are talking.
- Inattention: a child who daydreams or seems to be in another world, is sidetracked by what is going on around him or her. For more information about signs & symptoms visit: www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/attention-deficit-hyperactivity-disorder/what-are-the-symptoms-of-adhd-in-children.shtml

How is it diagnosed? – If ADHD is suspected, the diagnosis should be made by a professional with training in ADHD. This includes child psychiatrists, psychologists, developmental/behavioral pediatricians, behavioral neurologists, and clinical social workers. After ruling out other possible reasons for the child's behavior, the specialist checks the child's school and medical records and talks to teachers and parents who have filled out a behavior rating scale for the child. A diagnosis is made only after all this information has been considered. For more information about diagnosis visit: www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/attention-deficit-hyperactivity-disorder/how-is-adhd-diagnosed.shtml


Treatment – Effective treatments for ADHD are available, and include behavioral therapy and medications. For more information about treatment visit: www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/attention-deficit-hyperactivity-disorder/how-is-adhd-treated.shtml

Getting Help: Locate Services – Locate mental health services in your area, affordable healthcare, NIMH clinical trials, and listings of professionals and organizations. For more information about locating services visit: www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/getting-help-locate-services/index.shtml

Related Information

- Child and Adolescent Mental Health: www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/child-and-adolescent-mental-health/index.shtml
- Treatment of Children with Mental Disorders: www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/treatment-of-children-with-mental-illness-fact-sheet/index.shtml
- Medications: www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/mental-health-medications/index.html
- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder Information and Organizations from NLM's MedlinePlus (en Español): www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/attentiondeficithyperactivitydisorder.html

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