

ADHD

Managing ADHD

Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is a common childhood neurodevelopmental disorder. A child with ADHD may have trouble paying attention and controlling impulsive behaviors, act without thinking about results, and/or be overly active.¹

Signs and symptoms

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), children with ADHD may:

- Daydream a lot
- Forget or lose things a lot
- Have a hard time resisting temptation
- Have difficulty at school, at home, or with friends
- Have severe symptoms
- Have trouble taking turns
- Make careless mistakes
- Squirm or fidget
- Take unnecessary risks
- Talk too much

Diagnosis

Diagnosing ADHD in a child can include:

- A checklist for rating ADHD symptoms
- A medical exam, including hearing and vision tests
- A history of the child taken from parents, teachers, and sometimes the child

Causes of ADHD

According to the CDC, there is no one reason why a child or adult develops ADHD. Possible causes may include:

- Alcohol and tobacco use during pregnancy
- Brain injury
- Exposure to environmental toxins (e.g., lead) during pregnancy or at a young age
- Genetics
- Low birth weight
- Premature delivery

Scientists do not believe that ADHD is caused by:

- Eating too much sugar
- Parenting
- Social and environmental factors (e.g., poverty or family chaos)
- Watching too much television

Treatments

For preschool-aged children (4-5 years of age) with ADHD, the CDC recommends:

- Behavior therapy
- Training for parents and caregivers
- Medication, if all else fails

Good treatment plans include:

- Close monitoring
- Follow-ups with your child's doctor
- Lifestyle changes

Each child is different. What works for one child, may not work for another child.



Managing symptoms

Managing ADHD symptoms is important. A child's health and well-being can affect how severe symptoms are. Being healthy:

- Is important for all children
- Can especially be important for children with ADHD

Behavioral therapy and medication can help children manage ADHD symptoms, as can healthy behaviors, including:

- Maintaining a healthy diet, such as eating plenty of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains and choosing lean protein sources
- Participating in daily **physical activity**
- **Limiting the amount of daily screen time** from TVs, computers, phones, and other electronics
- Getting the **recommended amount of sleep** each night

Your child's doctor can talk to you about how to help manage ADHD symptoms.

More Information

National Resource Center on ADHD
National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH)

Source

1. "Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)," Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, last accessed October 19, 2021, <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/adhd/facts.html>.

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