

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)



What is ADHD?

ADHD is when a child, young person or adult has difficulty with paying attention, is sometimes much more energetic than others, and is unable to control certain emotional or behavioural impulses. ADHD is the most commonly co-occurring condition with Tourette Syndrome (TS).

Most children with ADHD are diagnosed between the ages of 6–12 years – in girls often later, and as with TS, the condition is more common in boys.

ADHD is caused by the movement and ‘braking’ systems in a child’s brain maturing more slowly. As with TS, not every child with ADHD will carry their symptoms through to adulthood; around 50% of adults will continue to experience ongoing symptoms.

Symptoms

Symptoms usually start in early childhood and although most toddlers and children are restless and excitable, children with ADHD are always ‘on the go’, find it challenging to focus their attention and don’t always understand social rules. The key thing to remember is that someone with ADHD is not behaving badly on purpose. The area in their brain which is responsible for self-control takes longer to mature than in children who don’t have ADHD.

Symptoms can range from mild to challenging, and some symptoms may even be specific to certain environments (e.g. home and not school). Typical examples of how ADHD symptoms might show up in everyday life:

- Difficulty sitting still – such as mealtimes or during a classroom lesson
- Constant fidgeting, moving, talking, making noises as this actually helps them concentrate
- Low patience threshold – hard to wait in a queue or listen attentively to another person
- May interrupt others or say and do things without thinking through the consequences – which is not the same as intentional inappropriate behaviour.

Managing ADHD

Treatments for ADHD are well researched; the two clinical options are medication and/or psychological therapies. If you suspect that you or your child has ADHD the first step is to see your GP. They will refer you to a specialist, if needed, for further assessment, diagnosis and treatment.

For more information and support you can contact the following ADHD organisations:

ADHD Foundation

www.adhdfoundation.org.uk
0151 237 2661

ADDISS –ADHD information services

www.addiss.co.uk
020 8952 2800

HACSG – The Hyperactive Children’s Support Group

www.hacsg.org.uk
01243 539 966

AADD-UK – service for adults with ADHD

www.aadduk.org