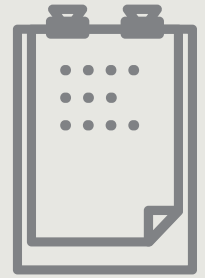


6 Steps to a Thorough ADHD Evaluation



A comprehensive evaluation for adult ADHD includes a clinical interview, paperwork — including questionnaires, checklists, and rating scales — a physical exam, and medical history. That’s a lot to cover in a few appointments. Harold Meyer, director of the New York City chapter of [CHADD](#), offers these tips for making the most of your time with your physician.

1. Describe problems with specificity.

Zero in on the concerns you want to address in your consultation. For instance: “At work, I find that I can’t stay on task or complete projects.” “I can’t find anything at home.” “I’m late for appointments.”

2. Consider your stance on medication before your appointment.

If you’re opposed to taking medication, state your philosophy up front and ask your doctor to recommend other treatment options. If your doctor insists on writing a prescription despite your aversion to medication, don’t be afraid to see someone else! If you have decided on medication, remember that the dose varies with each individual. It’s likely that you’ll need to try more than one brand and experiment with different doses to find the right one for you.

3. Ask the doctor to review medication options.

You want someone who will not just write a prescription, but who will discuss the diagnosis and treatment process in detail. Ask the following questions: What medications are under consideration? Why start with a particular medication? What can I expect? How should we evaluate the effect of the medication?

4. Discuss follow-up.

You’ll need to speak often with your doctor in the weeks following the diagnosis as you work to find the right treatment plan. Will your doctor be available? Will he or she charge you to consult? Will he or she prescribe medication refills by phone, or do you need to visit the office every time you’re running low?

5. Learn about alternatives to medication.

Find out about dietary and lifestyle modifications you might try. Can your doctor work with you on these? Is your doctor sympathetic to non-medical treatment? You may benefit from a referral to a psychologist who can offer strategies for dealing with problems at work, managing time, and so on.

6. Ask the doctor to meet with your family.

An ADHD diagnosis affects those you live with. Others in your life need to learn about the condition and how it will be managed. In fact, it can help to have someone close to you help monitor your behavior while on medication and note any changes.