

WHAT IS ADD / ADHD?

ADHD stands for attention-deficit / hyperactivity disorder. As stated in its name, it is a disorder that causes an individual to experience difficulty with paying attention and controlling their impulsive behaviors.

Note: It is normal for individuals to experience symptoms of ADHD occasionally. ADHD is diagnosed by a professional when an individual experiences them at a certain frequency. To be diagnosed with ADHD, the DSM-5 manual requires that for both inattention and hyperactivity/impulsivity, six or more symptoms from each category have persisted for at least six months. The DSM-5 manual also requires that these symptoms have directly and negatively impacted the individuals social, academic, or occupational activities.

Symptoms:

Inattention	Hyperactivity / Impulsivity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Careless mistakes made during school, work, or other activities. ❖ Difficulty maintaining attention during conversations, long lectures, or readings. ❖ Struggles to follow directions with school work, work, and other activities. ❖ Finds organization to be difficult (e.g., lack of time management, messy work, difficulty keeping things in order). ❖ Often loses personal items. ❖ Easily distracted by surroundings. ❖ Often forgetful in daily activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Often fidgets with hands or feet. ❖ Often leaves seat at inappropriate times (e.g., during class, meeting, or lectures). ❖ Often talks excessively or blurts out answers before another individual has finished asking a question. ❖ Finds it difficult to wait their turn (e.g., waiting in line, waiting to speak, waiting for a turn in a game). ❖ May interrupt or intrude on others.

ADHD in Children and Adults:

Children:

- ❖ Lack of focus in school, has a hard time listening to instructions, and often forgets to turn assignments in on time.
- ❖ Fidgeting or squirming in their seat / unable to remain seated.
- ❖ Unable to wait their turn, know when it's appropriate for them to speak, or recognize another individual's personal space.

Adults:

- ❖ Careless mistakes daily.
- ❖ Finds difficulty in paying attention, keeping track of items, and remembering to complete certain tasks.
- ❖ Finds it difficult to remain seated during longer meetings/lectures and may feel fidgety.
- ❖ May blurt out answers, interrupt other individuals, or say inappropriate things.

ADHD in children is often mistaken as poor behavior. Sometimes this behavior is bothersome to peers, which may lead to the child isolating themselves.

ADHD in adults may lead the individual to lack self-esteem in their occupation. ADHD in adults may also be harmful towards personal relationships.

Note: Biologically, people with ADHD have structural differences in their brain, which is why they experience difficulty with impulse control. Additionally, an individual is more likely to develop ADHD if their parents have the disorder; although, environmental factors also play a role.

Treatment:

While there is no specific cure for ADHD, symptoms can be regulated and managed with psychotherapy and medication.

Note: Some children may outgrow ADHD overtime.

Psychotherapy:

- ❖ CBT (Cognitive Behavioral Therapy) can help determine what negative thoughts and beliefs the patient has surrounding themselves and their ADHD, and then rearrange them to be positive.
- ❖ Helps the patient to learn skills that will help them with their organization and impulse control.
- ❖ Helps patient to learn new skills that may have originally been tough for the patient to complete (e.g., cleaning room, sitting through meeting/class, keeping track of personal items, and managing schedules).

Medication:

- ❖ Stimulants - Increase dopamine in the brain. Dopamine is the neurotransmitter that is associated with motivation, pleasure, attention, and focus. With an increase in Dopamine, and individual will have more of all of these things which reduces the severity of ADHD symptoms.