



ADHD

ATTENTION DEFICIT/ HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER

What is ADHD?

ADHD (attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder) is one of the most common neurodevelopmental disorders of childhood. Symptoms first start in childhood and often last into adulthood. Children with ADHD may have trouble paying attention, controlling impulsive behaviors (may act without thinking about what the result will be), or be overly active.

What are some of the signs of ADHD?

Many children have trouble focusing and behaving at one time or another. However, these types of symptoms in a child with ADHD can impact everyday life, often causing difficulties at home, at school, or with friends. The symptoms continue and can cause difficulty at school, at home, or with friends.

A child with ADHD might:

- daydream a lot
- forget or lose things
- squirm or fidget
- talk too much
- make careless mistakes or take unnecessary risks
- have a hard time resisting temptation

Deciding if a child has ADHD is a process with several steps. There is no single test to diagnose ADHD.

One step of the process may include a checklist for rating ADHD symptoms and taking a history of the child from parents, teachers, other caregivers, and sometimes, the child. Another step may include looking to see if other problems that can have symptoms like ADHD, like issues with hearing and vision, anxiety, depression, sleep problems, or certain types of learning disabilities better explain the child's symptoms.



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What can I do if I think my child may have ADHD?

First, talk with your child's healthcare provider to discuss your concerns. An ADHD diagnosis can be made by a mental health professional, like a psychologist or psychiatrist, or by a primary care provider, like a pediatrician or a nurse practitioner.

You can also contact a local early intervention program for a free or low-cost evaluation (children under age 3 years) or school system for a free evaluation (children 3 years or older). A doctor's referral is not necessary.

Acting early when there's a concern can help your child reach their full potential. For more information, visit:

[cdc.gov/act-early](https://www.cdc.gov/act-early)

CDC's Work

CDC funds the National Resource Center on ADHD (NRC), a program of CHADD—Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder. The NRC operates a call center with trained staff to answer questions about ADHD. The number is 1-866-200-8098. Their website has links to information for people with ADHD and their families: [chadd.org/understanding-adhd](https://www.chadd.org/understanding-adhd)

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