

## Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) Overview

*AD/HD is a disruptive behavior disorder, characterized by problems with attention, impulsivity and over-activity*

### Facts

- Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is **one of the most common** childhood behavioral disorders
- AD/HD affects between **4-12% of school age children**, and 2-4% of adults
- **Symptoms begin before age 7 years** and can cause serious difficulties in home, school or work life
- **Up to 67% of children** will continue to experience symptoms of AD/HD in adulthood

### What effects does AD/HD have?

ADHD is a **disruptive behavior disorder**, characterized by problems with **attention, impulsivity** and **over-activity**. Three types of AD/HD exist – inattentive type, hyperactive type, or combined. **Children with AD/HD are “at-risk” for potentially serious problems** including academic underachievement, school failure, difficulty getting along with peers, and problems dealing with authority.

### Signs and Symptoms of AD/HD

Children who have AD/HD often know what to do but they are unable to do it. This can be due to certain prevalent behaviors such as being **impulsive, easily distracted, or unable to focus**.

AD/HD predominately inattentive type: (AD/HD-I)5

- Fails to give close attention to details or makes careless mistakes.
- Has difficulty sustaining attention.
- Does not appear to listen.
- Struggles to follow through on instructions.
- Has difficulty with organization.
- Avoids or dislikes tasks requiring sustained mental effort.
- Loses things.
- Is easily distracted.
- Is forgetful in daily activities.

AD/HD predominately hyperactive-impulsive type: (AD/HD-HI)5

- Fidgets with hands or feet or squirms in chair.
- Has difficulty remaining seated.
- Runs about or climbs excessively.

- Difficulty engaging in activities quietly.
- Acts as if driven by a motor.
- Talks excessively.
- Blurts out answers before questions have been completed.
- Difficulty waiting or taking turns.
- Interrupts or intrudes upon others.

AD/HD combined type: (AD/HD-C)5

- Individual meets both sets of inattention and hyperactive/impulsive criteria.

### Diagnosis

To be diagnosed with AD/HD, individuals must exhibit six of the nine characteristics in either or both categories listed above. Symptoms must be present for at least six months. In children and teenagers, the symptoms must be more frequent or severe than in other children the same age. In adults, the symptoms must affect the ability to function in daily life and persist from childhood. In addition, the behaviors must create significant difficulty in at least two areas of life, such as home, social settings, school, or work.

### How is it controlled?

ADHD can be managed through behavioral or medical interventions, or a combination of the two. With early identification and treatment, children and adults can be successful. **Studies show that children who receive adequate treatment for AD/HD have fewer problems with school, peers and substance abuse, and show improved overall functioning, compared to those who do not receive treatment.**

### For further information

#### **About AD/HD**

<http://www.help4adhd.org/en/about>

#### **What is AD/HD?**

<http://kidshealth.org/parent/emotions/behavior/adhd.html>