

The Youth Mental Health Project EMPOWERS families and communities to act with the KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS and RESOURCES they need to support the SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL, MENTAL, and BEHAVIORAL health of youth.



WHAT IS ADHD?

Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), sometimes called attention deficit disorder (ADD), is one of the most common childhood disorders. It is considered a lifespan disorder as it is first diagnosed in childhood and presents throughout the lifespan. How it impacts an individual will change over the various phases of life. While most commonly identified in the school years, ADHD can be first identified in adolescence or adulthood. A person with ADHD may:

- Have more trouble paying attention or being patient than his peers.
- Act without thinking about the results.
- Be overly active or talkative compared to her peers.
- Have problems sitting still.

A person with ADHD tends to have problems in school, at work, and in social relationships.

The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-V) identifies two subtypes of ADHD--Predominantly Inattentive and Hyperactive/Impulsive. A person may have problems just with inattention or just with hyperactivity-impulsivity, but many people with ADHD exhibit characteristics of both.

Severe ADHD can be detected as early as four years of age, however according to the National Survey of Children's Health (NSCH) the median onset is six years of age.

THE FACTS

In 2016, Approximately 9.4% of children 2-17 years of age (6.1 million) were diagnosed with ADHD, according to parent report.

- Ages 2-5: Approximately 388,000 children.
- Ages 6-11: Approximately 2.4 million children.
- Ages 12-17: Approximately 3.3 million children.¹

SYMPTOMS

ADHD impacts a person in multiple areas of his life. Clinically, symptoms must be present in two or more settings (e.g., home, school, social) in order for a diagnosis to be given.

For children with ADHD, the symptoms seem to stay consistent up to early adolescence. As the person gets older, the symptoms often decrease, become less obvious, or go away. For some, the symptoms stay steady throughout life.²

A child with ADHD might:³

- Daydream a lot.
- Forget or lose things a lot.
- Squirm or fidget.
- Talk too much.
- Make careless mistakes or take unnecessary risks.
- Have a hard time resisting temptation.
- Have trouble taking turns.
- Have difficulty getting along with others.

1 in 5

children in the U.S. has a diagnosable mental health condition, yet less than 20 percent of those youth receive the treatment they need.

1. Center for Disease Control
2. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
3. Center for Disease Control
4. U.S. Department of Health & Human Services

CO-OCCURRING CONDITIONS⁵

Around two-thirds of children with ADHD also have another condition. Common conditions associated with ADHD include the following:

- Learning disabilities.
- Oppositional defiant disorder: refusal to accept directions or authority from adults or others.
- Conduct disorder: persistent destructive or violent behaviors.
- Anxiety and depression.
- Obsessive-compulsive disorder.
- Bipolar disorder.
- Tourette's syndrome.
- Sleep disorders.
- Bed-wetting.
- Substance abuse.

TREATMENTS

Although there is no cure for ADHD, currently available treatments may help reduce symptoms and improve functioning. ADHD is commonly treated with medication, education or training, therapy, or a combination of treatments.⁶

Research shows that using a multi-modality treatment plan, including parent strategies, psycho-educational support and intervention, and medication management, will provide the best long-term outcome.

TIPS FOR PARENTS⁷

Parents can help kids with ADHD stay organized and follow directions in the following ways:

- Maintain structure and routine as much as possible.
- Be clear and consistent with rules, directions, and expectations.
- Do not overload a child with too many directions at a time.
- Provide creative reminders and prompts, using visual cues when possible.
- Provide opportunities for creativity.
- Plan ahead for problematic situations by discussing the possibilities in advance.
- Keep it positive. Children with ADHD respond well to positive statements and feedback.
- Use frequent and immediate feedback.
- Don't rush to "fix" every problem for your child - allow time in your routine for thinking and problem-solving.
- Children with ADHD often get "stuck" when their initial plan does not work, so provide them with a few options for problem solving.
- If and when possible, use incentives before punishment. Natural consequences, those that are directly related to the behavior, are preferable.
- Keep your perspective.
- Don't take your child's behavior personally.

For more information:

The Youth Mental Health Project

ymhproject.org

National Institute of Mental Health

www.nimh.nih.gov

Special thank you to:

Dr. Tara Levinson

5. National Institute of Mental Health

6. National Institute of Mental Health

7. National Institute of Mental Health