

ADHD Basic Information

What is ADHD?

Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is one of the most common behavioral health issues in children. It starts before age 7 and up to 10% of school-age children have it.

Children with ADHD may act without thinking. They may have trouble sitting still. They may have trouble paying attention. They may understand what you want them to do, but they may have trouble doing it.

Diagnosing ADHD

There is no test to take to see if your child has ADHD. Many children are seen by their primary care physician (PCP). Some may be seen by a specialist like a psychiatrist or a psychologist.

A PCP or specialist will do a full assessment of the child. He/she will get information about behavior, school and medical history. Once the provider has all the information, a diagnosis can be made.

Treatment for ADHD

Parenting a child with ADHD can be difficult. Although ADHD cannot be cured, ADHD can be successfully treated.

ADHD is usually treated with medication and behavior therapy. Families should work with their PCP or specialist to come up with a plan for each child. Any good plan needs close follow-up and monitoring, and the doctor may make adjustments along the way.

Medications for ADHD

There are different kinds of medications to treat ADHD. Your doctor will discuss these with you. A “one-size-fits-all” plan does not work for children with ADHD. What works for one child may not work for another. A child who takes medicine must be seen by the doctor to make sure he or she is getting the right medicine and the right dose. This will happen in a “follow-up” visit.

Follow-up visits should happen within 30 days after the first ADHD visit and then at least 2 more times in the next 9 months. Follow-up visits help doctors see if the medicine is helping.

Behavioral Therapy

Medicine helps a child with ADHD. Research says it works better when combined with behavioral therapy.

Behavior therapy helps change behavior. It can help create a routine. It can help the child get organized. It can help parents change how they talk to their children.

ADHD & School

ADHD affects every area of a child's life. A teacher may be one of the first to notice ADHD symptoms.

It is important to keep in touch with your child's teacher. This will help you monitor your child's progress.

It will also help you advocate for your child's needs.

