

# ATTENTION DEFICIT HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER (ADHD) FACT SHEET

## General Information

- ADHD is one of the most common childhood disorders and can continue through adolescence and into adulthood. Symptoms include inattention, impulsivity, and hyperactivity. It is normal for students to have some difficulty in these areas, but for people with ADHD, these behaviors are more severe, occur more often and interfere with or reduce the quality of how they function socially, at school or in a job. (National Institute of Mental Health, [www.nimh.nih.gov](http://www.nimh.nih.gov) )
- There are three subtypes of ADHD: predominantly hyperactive-impulsive type, predominantly inattentive type and combined type. (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders DSM-V)
- More than two-thirds of children with ADHD have at least one other co-existing condition, including learning disabilities, Tourette syndrome, oppositional defiant and conduct disorders, anxiety and depression. ([CHADD ADHD Fact Sheet](#))
- Typically, ADHD symptoms are seen in early childhood. According to the DSM-5, several symptoms are required to be present prior to age 12.

## Symptoms (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) ; DSM-V)

- ADHD predominantly inattentive type:
  - Difficulty organizing or finishing a task
  - Difficulty paying close attention to details, makes careless mistakes
  - Difficulty following instructions or conversation
  - Easily distracted
  - Forgets details of daily routines
  - Avoids, dislikes or is reluctant to do tasks that require sustained effort
- ADHD predominantly hyperactive-impulsive type:
  - Fidgets and talks excessively
  - Hard to sit still for long
  - Feels restless, “on the go” acting as if “driven by a motor”
  - Impulsive
  - Difficulty waiting or taking turns
  - Interrupts or intrudes upon other
- ADHD combined type:
  - Individual exhibits symptoms of both types above

Note: Because symptoms can change over time, the presentation of symptoms may change over time.

## Causes (National Institute of Mental Health, [www.nimh.nih.gov](http://www.nimh.nih.gov))

Researchers at the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), National Institutes of Health (NIH), and across the country are studying the causes of ADHD. Current research suggests ADHD may be caused by interactions between genes and environmental or non-genetic factors. Like many other illnesses, a number of factors may contribute to ADHD such as:

- Genes
- Cigarette smoking, alcohol use, or drug use during pregnancy
- Exposure to environmental toxins, such as high levels of lead, at a young age
- Low birth weight
- Brain injuries

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## Diagnosis

- There is no single test to diagnose ADHD, therefore a comprehensive evaluation is necessary to establish a diagnosis, rule out other causes and determine the presence or absence of co-existing conditions. ([CHADD ADHD Fact Sheet](#))
- ADHD diagnosis should be made by a licensed professional with training in ADHD. This includes child psychiatrists, psychologists, developmental/behavioral pediatricians, behavioral neurologists, and clinical social workers. After ruling out other possible reasons for the child's behavior, the specialist should review the child's school and medical records and review observational information from teachers and parents who have filled out a behavior rating scale for the child. A diagnosis is made only after all information has been considered, using the criteria set forth by the DSM-V.

## Interventions and Resources in the School Setting

- [Multi-Tiered System of Support](#) (MTSS) is a multi-tiered framework, which promotes school improvement through engaging, research-based academics and behavioral practices. NC MTSS employs a systems approach using data-driven problem solving to maximize growth for all. An MTSS includes academic, behavioral and social-emotional instruction and support designed and differentiated for all students. See the [NCDPI MTSS Implementation Guide](#) for more information.
- Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (CHADD) offers a wealth of resources for educators including:
  - [Tips for Teachers video series](#) covering the following topics:
    - Tailoring homework to make a difference
    - Creating a positive dialogue with parents
    - What is the difference between school and classroom accommodations and interventions?
    - Executive function
  - [Classroom accommodations](#)
  - [Assignment accommodations](#)
  - [Effective academic instruction](#)
- School counselors, school psychologists and school social workers are valuable resources in the educational setting for information, resources and support and should be routinely consulted when concerns arise.
- In 2016, the US Department of Education [released guidance on the civil rights of students with ADHD](#), clarifying the obligation of schools to provide students with equal educational opportunity under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Included with the guidance is a resource guide to help educators, families, students, and other stakeholders better understand these laws as they pertain to students with ADHD in elementary and secondary schools in order to ensure these students receive the regular or special education, related aids and services, or supplementary aids and services needed to be successful. (US Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, July 2016)

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