

ADHD and Your Child

What is Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)?

ADHD is a condition of the brain that makes it difficult for children to control their behavior. It is one of the most common chronic conditions of childhood. It affects 4% to 12% of school-aged children. Symptoms can consist of inattention, hyperactivity, and/or impulsivity.

How can I tell if my child has ADHD?

It is normal for children to show symptoms of ADHD from time to time depending on what is occurring at home or at school. Sometimes a teacher is the first to notice inattention, hyperactivity, and/or impulsivity and bring these symptoms to the parents' attention. If your child has shown symptoms of ADHD on a regular basis for more than 6 months, discuss this with your pediatrician.

How can parents help with the diagnosis of ADHD?

As a parent, you will provide crucial information about your child's behavior and how it affects his/her life at home, in school, and in other social settings. Your pediatrician will want to know what symptoms your child is showing, how long the symptoms have occurred, and how the behavior affects your child and your family.

What is the treatment for ADHD?

Once the diagnosis is confirmed, the outlook for most children who receive treatment for ADHD is very encouraging. There is no specific cure for ADHD, but there are many age-appropriate treatment options available, which can be discussed with your pediatrician:

- Behavior therapy including parent training
- Individual and family counseling
- Medication therapy

What side effects can medication cause?

For most children, stimulant medications are a safe and effective way to relieve ADHD symptoms. Side effects with stimulants can occur sometimes. It is important for your child to have regular medical checkups to monitor how well the medication is working and check for possible side effects. Side effects and when to call the pediatrician can include:

- Decreased appetite/weight loss
- Sleep problems
- Social withdrawal
- Bizarre behaviors
- Severe headaches
- Increased irritability
- Difficult to arouse
- Suicidal/Homicidal thoughts
- Break in treatment plan