



Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

Prevalence:

Between 3% and 9% of children are affected.

Symptoms of inattentiveness:

Trouble sustaining attention, daydreaming, difficulty planning ahead, easily bored, reluctant to engage in prolonged mental activity, forgetful, losing things, difficulty expression compassion for others, difficulty expressing emotions, argumentative, impulsive (acting on a whim). Symptoms must be first apparent in childhood to meet diagnostic criteria for ADHD.

Symptoms of Hyperactivity:

Trouble sitting still, runs or climbs about when sitting still is required, acts as if driven by a motor.

In Adults:

Difficulty paying attention to details, enthusiastic at first then quickly losing interest, disorganized, forgetting things, tasks and appointments, avoiding prolonged mental effort (procrastinating); fidgeting or squirming, overly active and compelled to do things.

What is ADHD?

It appears to be a slowing down of some areas of the brain, especially the prefrontal cortex which is responsible for "conscience", logical thinking, some memory functions, planning and organizing.

How is it treated?

Medication: Stimulant medication (e.g., Concerta, Adderal), Strattera, in adults also Wellbutrin

Coaching: planning, organizing skills

Physical activity: intense aerobic exercise

Mental exercise: reading, meditation, biofeedback

Alternative treatments (minimal evidence of effectiveness): some diets (especially high protein),

Omega fatty acids (fish oils), elimination of certain food colorings and food preservatives

For parents: parent training: establishing and consistently enforcing rules.