

# Learning About ADHD in Teens

## What's it like to have ADHD?

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If you've had attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) since you were a kid, you may know the symptoms.

People with ADHD may have a **hard time paying attention**. It might be hard to finish projects that you are not into, and you might be obsessed with things you really like doing. It can be hard to follow conversations or to focus on friends. You may not like reading for very long. You may be bored with some kinds of jobs. You may forget or lose things.

People with ADHD may be **impulsive** and act before they think. You might make quick decisions like spending too much money or driving too fast.

And people with ADHD can be **hyperactive**. You might fidget and feel "revved up." It might be hard to relax.

Now that you are a teen, you can learn more about your own ADHD. As you get older and take on more responsibilities—like driving, getting a job, dating, and spending more time away from home—it's even more important to manage your ADHD. ADHD is a type of disability that you can master. The symptoms don't have to define you as a person. You can figure out how to take care of your ADHD with the right plan at school, the right support at home and, if needed, the right medicine.

## How do you manage ADHD?

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You can manage your ADHD by keeping your schoolwork and your life better organized, by talking to a counselor, and by taking medicine if your doctor recommends it.

ADHD medicines include stimulants, nonstimulants, antihypertensives, and antidepressants. The right medicine can help you be more calm and focused. It can help with relationships. But some medicines have side effects. These side effects include headaches, loss of appetite, and sleep problems or drowsiness. And it's important to know that the effects of using these medicines for long periods of time haven't been studied.

- Be safe with medicines. Take your medicines exactly as prescribed. Call your doctor if you think you are having a problem with your medicine.
- Don't share or sell your medicine or take ADHD medicine that's not yours. Sharing or selling ADHD medicine is a big problem among teens. It's illegal and dangerous.

Find a counselor you like and trust. Be open and honest in your talks. Be willing to make some changes.

Remove distractions at home, work, and school. Keep the spaces where you do your work neat and clear. Try to plan your time in an organized way.

## How can you deal with ADHD at school?

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You can speak up for yourself at school. Talk to your teachers about your ADHD at the start of the school year and when your schedule changes with a new semester. Make a plan with your teachers so that you can get the most out of school. This might include setting routines for homework and activities and taking tests in quiet spaces. And look for apps, videos, and podcasts to help you study.

It might help to study in short bursts and to take lots of breaks. Practice making lists of things you need to do. Think about getting a daily planner, or use a scheduling app on your smartphone or tablet. These tools

can help you stay organized. You can also talk to your parents, teachers, or a school counselor if you have problems in any of your classes.

Practice staying focused in class. Take good notes. Underline or highlight important information, and think ahead. Keep lots of highlighters, pens, and pencils around if that helps you stay focused.

Find subjects you like in school, and sign up for those classes. And don't forget to set free time for yourself to be active and have some fun. Try out a new sport, or take a class in art, drama, or music.

When it's time to apply to colleges or make plans for after high school, think about your needs. If you are going to college, think about the size of the school. What medical and tutoring services do they offer? What are the living arrangements like? And think about which careers are the best fit for you.

**Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety.** Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor if you are having problems. It's also a good idea to know your test results and keep a list of the medicines you take.

## Where can you learn more?

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Go to <https://www.healthwise.net/PatientEd>

Enter **X717** in the search box to learn more about "**Learning About ADHD in Teens**".

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# Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) in Adults: Care Instructions



## Your Care Instructions

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Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, or ADHD, is a condition that makes it hard to pay attention. So you may have problems when you try to focus, get organized, and finish tasks. It might make you more active than other people. Or you might do things without thinking first.

ADHD is very common. It usually starts in early childhood. Many adults don't realize they have it until their children are diagnosed. Then they become aware of their own symptoms.

Doctors don't know what causes ADHD. But it often runs in families.

ADHD can be treated with medicines, behavior training, and counseling. Treatment can improve your life.

**Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety.** Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor if you are having problems. It's also a good idea to know your test results and keep a list of the medicines you take.

## How can you care for yourself at home?

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- Learn all you can about ADHD. This will help you and your family understand it better.
- Take your medicines exactly as prescribed. Call your doctor if you think you are having a problem with your medicine. You will get more details on the specific medicines your doctor prescribes.
- If you miss a dose of your medicine, do not take an extra dose.
- If your doctor suggests counseling, find a counselor you like and trust. Talk openly and honestly. Be willing to make some changes.
- Find a support group for adults with ADHD. Talking to others with the same problems can help you feel better. It can also give you ideas about how to best cope with the condition.
- Get rid of distractions at your work space. Keep your desk clean. Try not to face a window or busy hallway.

- Use files, planners, and other tools to keep you organized.
- Limit use of alcohol, and do not use illegal drugs. People with ADHD tend to develop substance use disorder more easily than others. Tell your doctor if you need help to quit. Counseling, support groups, and sometimes medicines can help you stay free of alcohol or drugs.
- Get at least 30 minutes of physical activity on most days of the week. Exercise has been shown to help people cope with ADHD. Walking is a good choice. You also may want to do other activities, such as running, swimming, cycling, or playing tennis or team sports.

## When should you call for help?

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Watch closely for changes in your health, and be sure to contact your doctor if:

- You feel sad a lot or cry all the time.
- You have trouble sleeping, or you sleep too much.
- You find it hard to concentrate, make decisions, or remember things.
- You change how you normally eat.
- You feel guilty for no reason.

### Where can you learn more?

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Go to <https://www.healthwise.net/PatientEd>

Enter **B196** in the search box to learn more about "**Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) in Adults: Care Instructions**".

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# Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) in Children: Care Instructions



## Your Care Instructions

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Children with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) often have problems paying attention and focusing on tasks. They sometimes act without thinking. Some children also fidget or cannot sit still and have lots of energy. This common disorder can continue into adulthood.

The exact cause of ADHD is not clear, although it seems to run in families. ADHD is not caused by eating too much sugar or by food additives, allergies, or immunizations.

Medicines, counseling, and extra support at home and at school can help your child succeed. Your child's doctor will want to see your child regularly.

**Follow-up care is a key part of your child's treatment and safety.** Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor if your child is having problems. It's also a good idea to know your child's test results and keep a list of the medicines your child takes.

## How can you care for your child at home?

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### Information

- Learn about ADHD. This will help you and your family better understand how to help your child.
- Ask your child's doctor or teacher about parenting classes and books.
- Look for a support group for parents of children with ADHD.



## Medicines

- Have your child take medicines exactly as prescribed. Call your doctor if you think your child is having a problem with his or her medicine. You will get more details on the specific medicines your doctor prescribes.
- If your child misses a dose, do not give your child extra doses to catch up.
- Keep close track of your child's medicines. Some medicines for ADHD can be abused by others.

## At home

- Praise and reward your child for positive behavior. This should directly follow your child's positive behavior.
- Give your child lots of attention and affection. Spend time with your child doing activities you both enjoy.
- Step back and let your child learn cause and effect when possible. For example, let your child go without a coat when he or she resists taking one. Your child will learn that going out in cold weather without a coat is a poor decision.
- Use time-outs or the loss of a privilege to discipline your child.
- Try to keep a regular schedule for meals, naps, and bedtime. Some children with ADHD have a hard time with change.
- Give instructions clearly. Break tasks into simple steps. Give one instruction at a time.
- Try to be patient and calm around your child. Your child may act without thinking, so try not to get angry.
- Tell your child exactly what you expect from him or her ahead of time. For example, when you plan to go grocery shopping, tell your child that he or she must stay at your side.
- Do not put your child into situations that may be overwhelming. For example, do not take your child to events that require quiet sitting for several hours.
- Find a counselor you and your child like and can relate to. Counseling can help children learn ways to deal with problems. Children can also talk about their feelings and deal with stress.
- Look for activities—art projects, sports, music or dance lessons—that your child likes and can do well. This can help boost your child's self-esteem.

## At school

- Ask your child's teacher if your child needs extra help at school.
- Help your child organize his or her school work. Show him or her how to use checklists and reminders to keep on track.
- Work with teachers and other school personnel. Good communication can help your child do better in school.

## When should you call for help?

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Watch closely for changes in your child's health, and be sure to contact your doctor if:

- Your child is having problems with behavior at school or with school work.

- Your child has problems making or keeping friends.

## Where can you learn more?

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Go to <https://www.healthwise.net/PatientEd>

Enter **U507** in the search box to learn more about "**Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) in Children: Care Instructions**".

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