

What is ADHD?

Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is a disorder that has both behavioral and emotional symptoms. It is also sometimes called Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD). It is usually first seen in children and the problems may continue all through their life.

Children Who Have ADHD Might:

- Have trouble paying attention.
- Do things without thinking first.
- Be very active and seem like they are always moving or talking.
- Daydream a lot.
- Forget to do things they are supposed to do.
- Have trouble taking turns.
- Seem like they don't listen.
- Interrupt when other people are talking.
- Refuse to do homework.
- Refuse to do chores.
- Leave the table at family meals.
- Have trouble sitting through a church service.
- Dart out into the street.
- Argue with parents, teachers, and friends.
- Regularly say "I forgot."

A child with ADHD will have problem behaviors in more than one setting (at school, at home, at grandmas and at church). Two different children with ADHD may seem very different from each other. It depends on which combination of symptoms they have.

Who Can Diagnose ADHD?

A medical doctor must decide if your child has ADHD. This could be your child's primary care doctor or a doctor who specializes in ADHD (a psychiatrist or neurologist).

If you take your child to a psychiatrist, they may have you and your child meet with a therapist first to gather important information.

How will the doctor decide if my child has ADHD?

There is not a single test to diagnose ADHD. Your doctor must follow several steps to decide if your child has ADHD.

A doctor will follow these steps to diagnose ADHD:

- **Medical checkup:** A doctor will ask questions about your child's health. They might do a medical checkup to make sure that your child is well. Some physical health problems (sleep difficulties, problems with hearing, allergies etc.) can cause children to have these behaviors too.
- **Ask for history:** A doctor will ask you questions about your child's behavior. You may be asked to tell about times when your child has had these problems.
- **Rating scales:** A doctor will ask you to fill out a checklist of ADHD symptoms. The checklist helps the doctor see how many symptoms of ADHD your child has and how often they happen. You may also be asked to give your child's teacher a checklist to fill out.

Where can I learn more about ADHD?

- Children and Adults with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (CHADD)
www.CHADD.org
- Visit the MDwise website at:
MDwise.org

Compiled from the following sources:

www.mentalhealthamerica.net/go/information/get-info
www.nimh.nih.gov/health/index.shtml