

ARC Young Adult Mental Health Information Series

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Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD)

Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder is a brain disorder that affects how you pay attention, sit still, and control your behaviour. ADHD occurs in 5 % of youths and is three to four times more common in boys than girls. There are three different ways that the disorder can present itself in a person's life, including:

- Impulsive/hyperactive type
- Inattentive and distractible type
- Combined type

ADHD can't be prevented or cured. However, spotting it early, plus having a good treatment and education plan, can help a child or adult with ADHD manage their symptoms.



Symptoms

Inattentive

- Is easily distracted.
- Doesn't follow directions or finish tasks.
- Doesn't seem to be listening.
- Doesn't pay attention and makes careless mistakes.
- Forgets about daily activities.
- Has problems organizing daily tasks.
- Doesn't like to do things that require sitting still.
- Often loses things.
- Tends to daydream.

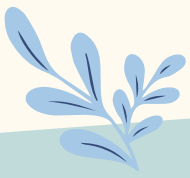
Combined

This involves signs of both types.

Hyperactive/Impulsive

- Often squirms, fidgets, or bounces when sitting.
- Doesn't stay seated.
- Has trouble playing quietly.
- Is always moving, such as running or climbing on things. In teens and adults, this is more often described as restlessness.
- Talks excessively.
- Is always "on the go," as if "driven by a motor".
- Has trouble waiting for their turn.
- Blurts out answers.
- Interrupts others.





Causes and Risk Factors

Experts aren't sure what causes ADHD. Several things may lead to it, including:

- Genes: ADHD tends to run in families.
- Brain chemicals: These may be out of balance in people with ADHD.
- Brain changes: Areas of the brain that control attention are less active in children with ADHD.

Risk factors for developing ADHD have been identified-

- Being born prematurely.
- Toxins, such as lead.
- A brain injury or a brain disorder.
- Eating a "western" diet. One study found that children who ate a diet high in added sugar, fats, and sodium and low in fibre and omega-3 fatty acids had a greater chance of ADHD.
- Nutritional deficiencies.

Treatment

ADHD is best treated with a combination of behaviour therapy and medication. Cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT) can help build self-esteem, reduce negative thoughts and improve problem-solving skills. Medication may be prescribed to help the person accomplish tasks.

Additional behaviours to help manage ADHD include:

- Developing healthy eating habits such as eating plenty of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains and choosing lean protein sources.
- Participating in daily physical activity based on age.
- Limiting the amount of daily screen time from TVs, computers, phones, and other electronics.
- Getting the recommended amount of sleep each night based on age.

Resources available

Aire Ouverte for youth 12-25 years of age. 5811 Taschereau Blvd., local 30, Brossard, QC J4Z 1A5
Drop-in services: Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 1:00-8:00 p.m. and Saturday 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. By appointment from Monday to Friday. (450) 445-4474

Association des parents des enfants en difficulté – www.aped.org

West Island neuropsychology and counseling centre – www.westislandneuroandcounseling.com

Canadian ADHD resource alliance – www.caddra.ca

Psychosocial support available at your local CLSC and through your primary care physician.

CLSC St-Hubert (450) 443-7400

CLSC Brossard (450) 445-4452

CLSC St-Jean-sur-Richelieu (450) 358-2572

CLSC Richelieu (450) 658-7561

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Financial support provided by:



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