

Attention Deficit Disorder with Hyperactivity

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Due to the changes in the definition of what causes ADHD and ADD, it's no wonder that parents are so concerned about the diagnosis and treatment of their children. The two share some common traits, but differ in some of the behaviors expressed by the child or teenager

These symptoms are usually associated with Attention Deficit Disorder with Hyperactivity (ADHD):

- Has difficulty waiting in turn in group situations
- Interrupts or intrudes on others
- Blurts out answers to questions
- Has difficulty playing quietly
- Leaves his or her seat
- Runs about or climbs excessively
- Fidgets or squirms
- Talks excessively
- Acts as if "driven by a motor" and can't remain sti

These symptoms are usually associated with Attention Deficit Disorder *without* Hyperactivity (ADD)

- Has difficulty following through on instructions
- Has difficulty sustaining attention
- Seems not to listen.
- Loses things necessary for tasks
- Fails to give close attention to detail
- Is disorganized
- Makes careless mistakes in schoolwork
- Forgets things often
- Daydreams when should be paying attention
- Unmotivated to complete schoolwork or task

The core problems of ADHD are hyperactivity, impulsiveness and lack of persistence. By contrast, the core problems with ADD without hyperactivity are inattention and cognitive slowness or sluggishness in performing perceptual-motor speed tasks.

Although children with these disorders are more difficult to raise than non-ADHD or non-ADD children, parents should not be discouraged that their children will never reach their full potential. There are a number of support groups available to help children and parents to help understand the ADHD or ADD diagnoses and come up with strategies to help minimize its effect on children's lives.

According to the most recent reports, the consumption of sugar, food additives and dyes, vitamin deficiencies, lead poisoning, parental influences, birth complications, brain damage and inappropriate parenting are no longer considered significant causes of ADHD and ADD.

The current consensus is that ADHD and ADD may have several causes, and that it most likely is the result of an inherited tendency toward dopamine depletion, or underactivity in those parts of the brain affecting attention, impulsiveness, and sensitivity to behavioral consequences.

The treatment of ADHD and ADD involves several steps, including individual and family education, individual and family counseling, the use of behavioral management programs, and the use of any medications prescribed. Medication does not actually cure the problem; it only controls the symptoms while the body is metabolizing it.

One way to help children with ADHD and ADD is through behavioral modification techniques, such as time-outs and a merit (reward) system to change a child's behavior. Parents should try this approach for a period of two to four weeks. If no progress results, then the use of stimulants (such as Ritalin) should be considered.

There are two important concepts that parents need to understand.. First, you are more likely to succeed in changing their child's behavior by rewarding what is desired than by punishing what is undesired. Second, you must be consistent in what they consider to be acceptable and unacceptable behavior.

Learning is often affected by ADHD and ADD. At least 25 percent of children diagnosed with ADHD and ADD also suffer from a communication or learning disorder, while another 40 percent exhibit behavioral patterns associated with conduct disorder and oppositional defiant disorder.

There are several steps you can take to help your child with his or her schoolwork. These include:

- Helping your child organizing school materials. For example, you might develop a system for keeping track of which papers need to be turned in and which have been returned to the child.
- Providing your child with backpacks and folders to keep things together.
- Setting up schedules of when tasks should be accomplished.
- Making sure the child understands homework instructions. You may also meet with the teacher periodically to review the amount of homework your child can handle and to monitor his or her progress in school.
- Helping the child find a quiet, uncluttered area where they are few distractions.
- Setting aside specific times each day for the child to complete homework

When a consistent behavioral plan is used, the child's behavior should begin to improve. When this happens, parents often regain control and become more confident in their ability to parent.

Children with learning disabilities and ADHD or ADD often develop secondary emotional, social, and family problem. Seeking assistance from a competent mental health professional will help you assess the problem and provide needed interventions.

Children and adolescents who learn that they can be controlled and that they will not be overwhelmed by not being in control are usually happier.