

ADHD Quick Facts About ADHD

Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder—ADHD—is a brain-based disorder that affects about one in ten school-aged children. Symptoms continue into adulthood for more than half of those who have it in childhood. People who have ADHD have higher levels of inattention, impulsivity, and/or hyperactivity than their peers.

Executive function often is generally impaired when individuals have ADHD. This affects their ability to organize, plan, and manage thoughts and actions. They may have difficulty completing tasks or forget important things and may not consider the long-term consequences of their actions.

ADHD can cause a person to have many problems in life. Early diagnosis and treatment are extremely important in preventing those problems.

Symptoms

Frequently, ADHD symptoms are first noticed in early childhood. They can sometimes be hard to tell apart from the impulsivity, inattentiveness, and active behavior typical for children under the age of four. For this reason, diagnosis is usually made when a child is five or older. Children need to exhibit six or more symptoms for a diagnosis; older teens and adults should have at least five of the symptoms. Symptoms can change over time. For most people, ADHD persists in some



form from childhood through adolescence and into adulthood, although when present, hyperactivity tends to decrease over time.

Causes

Many genetic studies indicate that ADHD runs in families. Yet ADHD is a complex disorder, the result of many interacting genes, and most importantly, the result of genes interacting with the environment. Other risk factors for ADHD include exposure to environmental toxins during pregnancy or childhood, low birth weight or brain injury.

Treatment

ADHD is treated through combinations of medical, educational, behavioral, and psychological interventions depending on the individual's needs. This approach to treatment is called "multimodal" and, depending on the person's age, may include parent training, medication, skills training, counseling, behavioral therapy, and classroom interventions.