

# SPG Guide to ADD/ADHD

## ADHD is a syndrome

The syndrome is composed of 3 categories: hyperactivity, impulsivity and inattention. A diagnosis of ADHD is made by your doctor if your child exhibits symptoms and features as defined by established criteria. When these problems are of a degree that they interfere with his/her ability to lead a normal life a diagnosis can be made.

There are no laboratory tests to confirm the diagnosis.

Untreated, ADHD may cause symptoms in different situations such as at school, with friends or at home.

4-12% of school aged children have ADHD. About 3times more boys than girls are diagnosed with ADHD.

## Criteria for diagnosis include:

Symptoms occur in more than one setting (home, social and school)

Symptoms occur for > 6 months

Symptoms must be present before the age of 7

Symptoms impair academic, social, or occupational activities

Symptoms are beyond what is considered normal for your child's developmental level

Symptoms are not due to a different diagnosis

## Rating scales

Your doctor may have you and your child's teachers complete a rating scale to help diagnose ADHD. These tests in addition to discussions with your doctor and a physical exam will be used to help make a diagnosis. Other disorders must be investigated as well. Over 1/2 of children diagnosed with ADHD may have other or associated disorders such as learning disabilities.

## Treatment Options

There is no specific cure for ADHD. Education and behavioral therapy often help reduce symptoms. However, when these strategies are not enough, medication may be needed.

**Behavior Therapy:** Behavior therapy is dependent on your child's age and development. Some therapies include: setting goals, providing rewards and consequences of behaviors, and consistency may help to improve your child's behaviors and decrease symptoms.

## Tips for parents:

Keep your child on a daily schedule

Decrease distractions

Reward good behavior

Set small, reachable goals

Use charts/checklists to track homework/chores

Limit choices

Find activities your child will succeed at

Use calm discipline

## Tips for teachers:

Teachers can also have routines, reward systems, behavior charts, sit your child near them, use small groups, keep assignments short/break them into sections, positive cues to stay on task

**Medications:** Medication may be prescribed. Medication can be short or long acting depending on the your child's needs.

Common side effects to these medications include: sleeping/appetite problems, staring/daydreaming, withdrawal (bad mood/irritability as the medication wears off), anxiety, stomachaches, nausea/vomiting, dry mouth, irritability, emotional lability, dizziness, tics

### **Once a medication is prescribed by your doctor**

ADHD medications are not based on weight and often it takes time and patience to determine the correct medication and dosage for your child. If your child is having any side effects on the medication, please feel free to contact your doctor.

We require a 1 month follow up visit with your doctor after medication is started.

We then require your child to be seen every 6 months-once for an ADHD medication follow up and once for a well child (routine) exam. Your doctor will need to follow your child's height/weight and blood pressure while on medication.

Prescriptions must be picked up in the office monthly and signed for by a parent/legal guardian

We can not mail the prescriptions

Parents must call for a refill request every 28-30 days - when you call the office follow the prompts for prescription refill. Be certain to leave a message with your child's name, birth date, name and dose of the medication and a phone number if there is a problem.

Prescription requests take 24 hours to fill.

### **Resources**

[www.chadd.org](http://www.chadd.org)

[www.add.org](http://www.add.org)

[www.help4adhd.org](http://www.help4adhd.org)

[www.idea.ed.gov](http://www.idea.ed.gov)