

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

When your brain wants too much

Information for Teenagers and Young Adults



Even some of the most famous singers, athletes and entrepreneurs have ADHD.

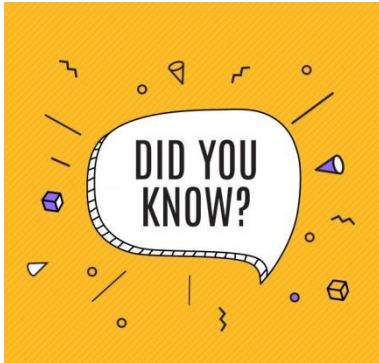
What is ADHD?

Attention **D**eficit **H**yperactivity **D**isorder: A medical condition that influences the neurotransmitters (messengers) in the brain, which can make it hard to:

- Sit still
- Pay attention
- Plan what you are doing
- Remember things
- Do your (school) work
- Control your impulses/be patient.

Anything else you can think of?





Facts about ADHD

- In ADHD, parts of the brain that control these behaviours (e.g. attention, concentration and impulsivity) are not as active as they should be
- If you have ADHD you will have noticed these difficulties from an early age
- The exact cause of ADHD is unknown but we think it is partly inherited through genes
- 70-80% of people will continue to experience ADHD in adulthood.

Associated difficulties

Do you recognise any of these **difficulties** associated with ADHD?



- ☐ Struggling at school
- ☐ Struggling at work
- ☐ Getting in trouble at home/school
- ☐ Difficulties making/keeping friends
- ☐ Having low mood
- ☐ Being anxious
- ☐ Having low self-esteem
- ☐ Having a temper
- ☐ Showing disruptive behaviour
- ☐ Specific difficulties (e.g. reading).



Associated strengths

Do you recognise any of these **strengths** associated with ADHD?



- ☐ Being very creative
- ☐ Being a good and fun friend
- ☐ Working hard
- ☐ Persevering
- ☐ Staying active
- ☐ Doing multiple things at once
- ☐ Being good at managing stressful situations.

Treatment of ADHD



Medication:

Is **not** a cure of ADHD, but it can help:

- Reduce hyperactivity and impulsiveness
- Improve attention and concentration.

Some people only take medication for ADHD when they most need it (e.g. school days)

Non-medication:

Targets areas where difficulty occurs, for example by using:



- Behavioural management training
- Parent training
- Social skills training
- Anger management training
- Using practical strategies in school.

My cycle of ADHD:

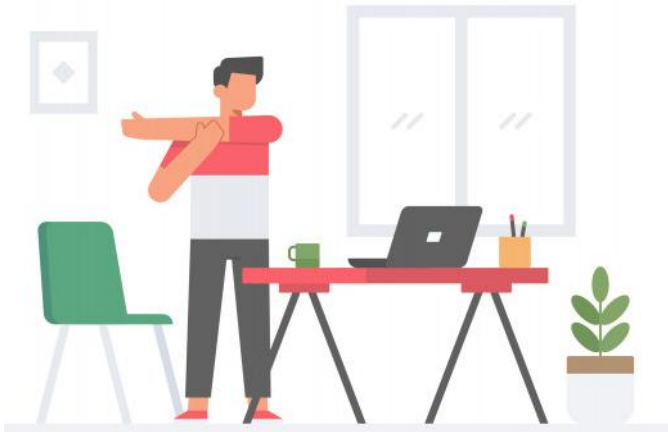


Don't forget: **You can always ask for help.**

Getting distracted and moving around

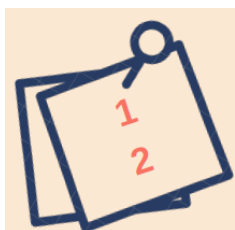
What can I do to help my busy brain?

- Keep a **checklist of tasks** I need to do so I can stay organised
- Ask for **clear** and **direct instructions**
- Take a **movement break** for 2 minutes
- Use a **fidget type toy** or **stress ball**.



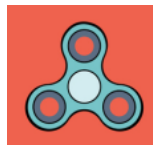
How can I keep my brain quiet and organised?

- Ask others to **use pictures**, not words to explain things to me
- Ask for **more time** to finish a task
- Only try to **remember a few things at once**.



How can I stay on task?

- Break **tasks** up into **smaller pieces** to make them easier
- Take **moving-around-breaks** and use **fidget type toys** to help with my restlessness
- Have a **quiet** and **tidy** place to work so I can pay attention.



Finding it hard to plan?

If you use a **visual timetable** to keep track of your day, both you and people around you will know what you are doing next and you will have less to worry about.



Trying to do (school) work:

What can I do to help myself?

- Make sure I read the instructions slowly and in full
- Check my work when I am finished
- If I am getting distracted, take a 2 minutes movement break.



Checklist for checking:



- ☐ Have I asked about anything I didn't understand?
- ☐ Did I read all of it?
 - ☐ Top to bottom
 - ☐ All the pages
 - ☐ Other side of the page
- ☐ Have I answered all the questions/completed all the tasks?
- ☐ Will the person checking my work be able to read and understand my answers?

Struggling with controlling emotions or worries?

You can use a feelings thermometer to monitor your feelings and calm yourself down before it gets too much to handle.





Frequently asked questions

Q: Can I take contraceptive medication as well as my ADHD medication?

A: Yes, it is safe to take them together. Remember though, the pill won't protect you from sexually transmitted infections so use a condom also.

Q: Sometimes I drink alcohol with friends and have been offered drugs. Will this affect my ADHD?

A: Alcohol won't interact with your medication (but it isn't worth the risk). However, it will exaggerate the features of ADHD, which makes it more likely to get into difficulties. Drugs will have the same effects on your physical and mental health as they do for everyone else and have serious effects on relationships at home or school. If you are worried about your drug or alcohol use, you can get help from Crew 2000 which offers free, confidential advice (<https://www.crew.scot>)

Q: Since I've got problems controlling some behaviour, is it not my fault if I get into trouble with the police?

A: If you are charged with an offence once you are 16, the Court may ask for a psychiatric report to help them decide how to proceed. You will, however, be seen as responsible for your own actions and a diagnosis of ADHD will not excuse you.

Q: Can I drive if I have ADHD?

A: At present there is no requirement for drivers with ADHD to undergo any special testing or monitoring. Be mindful if you have a tendency to take risks and act impulsively though, as that is more likely to cause accidents.



More information:



I would if I could – A teenager's guide to ADHD/hyperactivity by Michael Gordon.



Helpline: Young Minds Telephone: 0800 018 2138

Call free from a landline

Monday and Friday: 10am – 1pm

Tuesday – Thursday: 1pm - 4pm



Give Us a Shout: text SHOUT to **85258** for free, confidential support

(<https://giveusashout.org/>)

Websites:

1. www.addiss.co.uk
2. www.adders.org
3. <https://young.scot/get-informed>
4. <https://www.scottishadhdcoalition.org/>
5. <https://www.boxofideas.org/ideas/information/glossary/adhd/>

Information sourced from:

1. The **NICE** guideline on diagnosis and management of ADHD in children, young people and adults (2008) -
<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng87/evidence/full-guide-pdf-4783651311>
2. Treat of Teens with ADHD, CHADD 2018 -
<https://chadd.org/for-parents/treatmentof-teens-with-adhd/>
3. Identifying and Treating Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder: A Resource for School and Home -
<https://www2.ed.gov/rschstat/research/pubs/adhd/adhd-identifying-2008.pdf>
4. Attention-deficit-hyperactivity disorder and reward deficiency syndrome (Blum et.al 2008) -
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2626918/>