

ADHD in adults

What is ADHD?

Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is a group of behavioural symptoms that include inattentiveness, hyperactivity and impulsiveness.

Symptoms of ADHD tend to be noticed at an early age and most cases are diagnosed between the ages of 6 to 12 years old.

Symptoms usually improve with age, but many adults who are diagnosed with the condition at a young age continue to experience problems.

What causes ADHD?

The exact cause of ADHD is unknown, but the condition has been shown to run in families. Research has also identified a number of possible differences in the brains of people with ADHD compared to those who don't have the condition.

Other factors that have been suggested as potentially having a role in ADHD include:

- being born prematurely (before the 37th week of pregnancy)
- having a low birthweight
- smoking, alcohol or drug abuse during pregnancy

ADHD can occur in people of any intellectual ability, although it's more common in people with learning difficulties.

How ADHD is treated?

Although there's no cure for ADHD, it can be managed with appropriate advice and support, alongside medication, if necessary.

Medication is often the first treatment offered to adults with ADHD, although psychological therapies such as cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) may also help.

Living with ADHD

Some issues that may arise in day-to-day life include:

- getting to sleep at night
- getting ready on time
- listening to and carrying out instructions
- being organised
- social occasions
- shopping

Some adults with ADHD may have issues with drugs, crime and employment.

Adults living with ADHD, may find it helpful to:

- make lists, keep diaries, stick up reminders and set aside some time to plan what you need to do if you find it hard to stay organised.
- let off steam by exercising regularly.

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- find ways to help you relax, such as listening to music or learning relaxation techniques.
- if you have a job, speak to your employer about your condition, and discuss anything they can do to help you work better.
- talk to your doctor about your suitability to drive, as you'll need to tell the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) if your ADHD affects your driving.
- contact or join a local or national support group – these organisations can put you in touch with other people in a similar situation, and they can be a good source of support, information and advice.

Getting help

AADD-UK:

AADD-UK is a charity specifically for adults with ADHD - visit: <https://aadduk.org/>

