

# HealthyActions

Achieving Your Goals for Healthy Living



## Talking to Your Doctor About ADHD

If you think your child may have ADHD, talk to your doctor. ADHD is usually found in a child's preschool years.<sup>1</sup>

Attention deficit hyperactivity (uh-TEN-shen DEF-uh-sit HI-per-ak-TIV-it-ee) disorder (ADHD) is one of the most common mental disorders found in children.<sup>1</sup> Children with ADHD:

- May have trouble paying attention
- May be more active than other kids their age

Talk to your child's doctor about how to best treat a child who has ADHD. It may be hard to decide what treatment is best. Learn as much as you can about the disease. Become your child's champion. No single treatment is the answer for every child<sup>2</sup>:

- Your doctor may suggest your child see a counselor or therapist to help change behavior<sup>2</sup>
- It is helpful for parents or the family to see a therapist or join a support group. That way parents and families can learn new ways to work with their child<sup>2</sup>
- Work with your child and set rules to help them organize their daily activities. A child with ADHD needs rules they can understand and follow. Here are some things you can do<sup>2</sup>:
  - Make a schedule. Keep to a routine every day that includes homework and playtime
  - Organize everyday items. Always put clothes, school supplies, and other items in the same place
  - Make lists of homework assignments and books that your child needs to bring home
- The doctor may suggest a medicine that can help your child

For some kids, therapy and drugs together might work best. One drug might work better than another.<sup>3</sup> Some parents choose therapy alone. The treatment will depend on your child's history, needs, and other health problems.



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## Watch for Side Effects

You will want to watch your child for side effects from the ADHD medicine. Higher doses of the drug will cause more side effects.<sup>2</sup> Some common side effects are:

- Lowered appetite<sup>2</sup>
- Trouble sleeping<sup>2</sup>
- Nervousness<sup>5</sup>
- Being more irritable<sup>2</sup>
- Mild stomachache<sup>2</sup>
- Mild headache<sup>2</sup>

## Follow-up After the Drug is Prescribed

Your doctor may think your child can be helped by taking medicine for ADHD. You and the doctor will work together to make sure the ADHD medicine is working well. You should bring your child in for follow-up visits. It is important that your child keep going to therapy as well. Once your child is doing well on an ADHD drug, you should see the doctor for follow-ups every 3 to 6 months.<sup>4</sup>

## Feedback

Your child's doctor will want to check on how the ADHD drug is working. The doctor might give you a checklist with a list of behaviors on it. The doctor might also give a checklist to your child's teacher. On this list you can give scores to different types of behavior. Your doctor can compare these to the list you filled out during one of your first visits. In this way your doctor can see if the ADHD drug is helping your child.<sup>5</sup>

## Growing Into a Teenager With ADHD

When your child starts middle school or high school, it is a good time for him or her to see the doctor.<sup>2</sup> There are hormone changes in your child's body during this time. Your child's doctor can make sure that the ADHD treatment your child is on is still the best choice.

## Part of a Team

Think of yourself as part of a team. A child's team includes:

- Parents
- Grandparents
- Sisters and brothers
- Teachers
- Counselors
- Doctors

Be sure to meet with your child's teacher often to see how your child is doing in school. Praise your child for good efforts and for finishing small tasks.

## References

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