

## ADD / ADHD

Some professionals believe that ADHD (Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder) is a condition wherein an individual's brain cannot slow down enough to complete an assigned task. The condition is usually noticed in childhood during the early elementary school years, but can continue through adolescence and adulthood. ADHD makes it hard to for a person to pay attention and/or control his/her actions. Parents and teachers at times describe a child with ADHD as one who "just can't sit still." Occasionally intelligent children receive the label of being "learning-disabled" which then has an affect on the emotional and social areas of their life. ADHD may exist alone or with learning disabilities and/or communication problems.

ADD (Attention Deficit Disorder) is similar to what is described above without the symptoms of hyperactivity. ADD is often missed because the child's lack of hyperactive behavior does not catch the attention of the caregivers.

In regards to the thinking abilities both ADD and ADHD have the following similar characteristics:

- Poor attention span. The child is easily distracted or has a hard time following directions, leaves tasks unfinished, doesn't listen or loses things often.
- Weak impulse control. The child has difficulty waiting his turn, acts without thinking and often interrupts.
- In the case of ADHD the individual has hyperactivity, in which the child fidgets constantly, has difficulty staying seated or being quiet and talks a lot.

The exact cause for ADHD is unknown but many natural health physicians and researchers believe that potential causes for the modern epidemic of ADHD and ADD can include a combination of the following:

- Food additives
- Low blood sugar
- Refined sugar
- Allergies (especially to food)
- Genetic predisposition
- Thyroid dysfunction
- Chemical imbalance
- Vaccinations
- Child's environment at home or school
- Formaldehyde
- Damage to the brain, i.e., from an injury
- Excess stress at birth or lead paint Mineral deficiency

A team of qualified professionals, including a physician, therapist, or psychiatrist can rule out other causes of the child's behavior.

### **Treatment suggestions**

A combination of treatments can be effective. These may include:

- Behavior modification. This involves setting up clear rules for behavior and consistency in following those rules.
- Proper diet. For some children food additives and allergies may play a role in ADHD. Make sure the child eats a well balance diet. Limit sugar and take a vitamin supplement.
- Medication. Prescription medications are only one form of treatment but they can help many children.

- The emotional, academic, medical, and social needs should be addressed, as they become appropriate.
- Educational planning with the school
- Medical examination to rule out any physical or allergy problems that may be contributing to the ADD symptoms
- Alternative treatments, such as physical or sensory exercises and natural remedies have been successful in reducing or eliminating symptoms