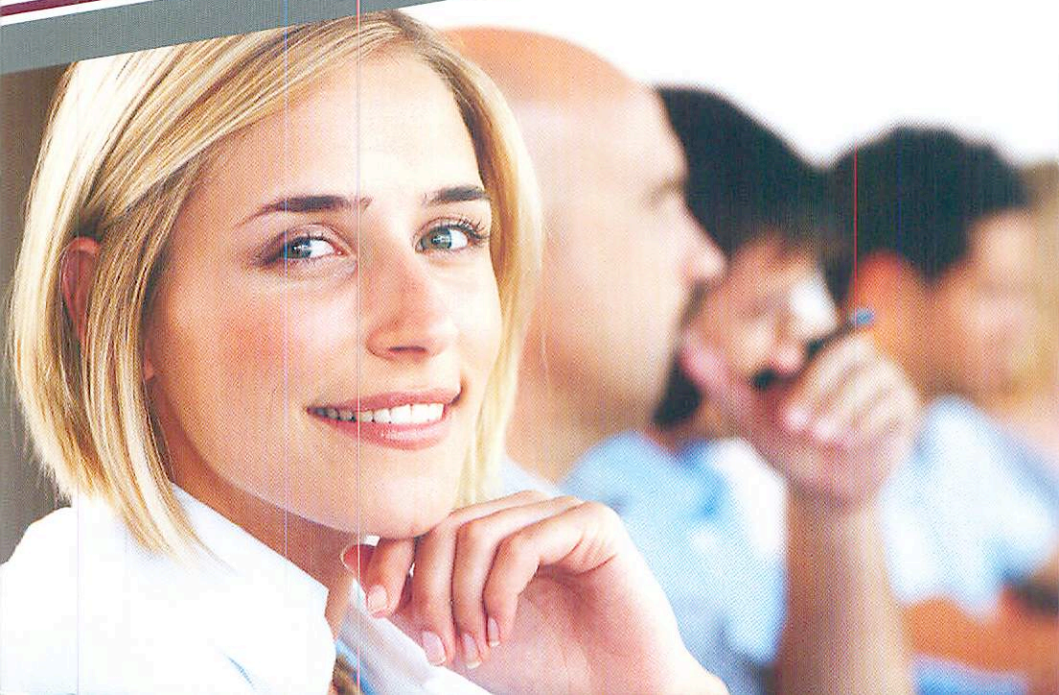


ADHD and Adults







ADHD Is Not Just a Childhood Disorder

Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) can affect children, teens, and adults. If you are an adult with ADHD, you aren't alone.

It is estimated that more than 15 million Americans have ADHD, and about 10 million of these cases are estimated to be in adults aged 18 years and older.* Many adults with ADHD were originally diagnosed as children. In fact, nearly 50% of children continue to have ADHD in adulthood.

ADHD can affect adults at school or work, at home, and in social settings. But that doesn't mean ADHD has to rule your life. With the help of your doctor, ADHD can be treated and managed. The more steps you take toward understanding ADHD, hopefully the better you can develop a plan to help manage it.

If you are concerned about whether you are experiencing symptoms of ADHD, fill out the Adult Symptom Questionnaire at the back of this pamphlet and talk to your doctor.

*In 2007, an estimated 9.5% or 5.4 million school-aged children were reported by their parents to have ever been diagnosed with ADHD. The disorder is estimated to affect 4.4% of US adults based on a survey of 3,199 adults aged 18 to 44. By applying this percentage to the full adult population aged 18 and over, about 10 million adults are estimated to have ADHD.



What Is ADHD?

ADHD stands for Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder. ADHD is a neurobehavioral disorder that affects children, adolescents, and adults, and is characterized by a persistent pattern of inattention and/or hyperactivity and impulsivity.

Everyone has trouble paying attention sometimes, but people with ADHD have problems with inattention, hyperactivity, or impulsivity that are more frequent and severe than what is typical for their peers. Adults with ADHD may be affected at school, work, home, and in social settings as a result of the symptoms of inattention, hyperactivity, and impulsivity.

Signs & Symptoms of ADHD

The three core symptoms of ADHD are inattention, hyperactivity, and impulsivity. If you're concerned that you have symptoms of ADHD, start by talking to your doctor about the symptoms below:

Inattention

- Often fails to give close attention to details or makes careless mistakes in schoolwork, work, or other activities
- Has difficulty sustaining attention in tasks or play activities
- Does not seem to listen when spoken to directly
- Does not follow through on instructions and fails to finish work
- Has difficulty organizing tasks and activities
- Avoids, dislikes, or is reluctant to engage in tasks that require sustained mental effort
- Loses things necessary for tasks or activities
- Is easily distracted

Hyperactivity

- Fidgets with hands or feet or squirms in seat
- Leaves seat in classroom or in other situations in which remaining seated is expected
- Runs about or climbs excessively in situations in which it is inappropriate (in adolescents or adults, may be limited to subjective feelings of restlessness)
- Has difficulty engaging in leisure activities quietly
- Is “on the go” or acts as if “driven by a motor”
- Talks excessively

Impulsivity

- Blurts out answers before questions have been completed
- Has difficulty awaiting turn
- Interrupts or intrudes on others

This is not a diagnostic tool. These symptoms are not the only criteria for diagnosing ADHD. Only a trained health care professional can diagnose ADHD.

How Is ADHD Diagnosed?

Only a doctor or trained health care professional can diagnose ADHD. No single test can determine whether an adult has ADHD. Because ADHD may vary from person to person, a licensed health professional will make a diagnosis based on a history obtained from the patient and/or family member.

For a diagnosis to be made:

- At least 6 of the 9 symptoms of inattention and/or 6 of the 9 symptoms of hyperactivity/impulsivity must have been present for at least 6 months to an extent that is not consistent with one's peers,
- Symptoms must be present in at least 2 settings, for example, at home, in social situations, or at school/work,
- Symptoms significantly impair functioning in at least 2 settings (eg, at school, at work, or in social settings),
- Some symptoms initially appeared before the age of 7 (past school reports may hold clues to an ADHD diagnosis), or
- Symptoms cannot be better accounted for by another disorder.



There are 3 subtypes of ADHD.

Some people may experience more of the inattentive symptoms of ADHD, whereas others may experience more of its hyperactive and impulsive symptoms.

1 ADHD, Inattentive Type:

When a person experiences 6 or more symptoms of inattention for at least 6 months. Fewer than 6 of the hyperactive/impulsive symptoms of ADHD may be present.

2 ADHD, Hyperactive/Impulsive Type:

When a person experiences 6 or more symptoms of hyperactivity/impulsivity for at least 6 months. Fewer than 6 of the inattentive symptoms of ADHD may be present.

3 ADHD, Combined Type:

When a person experiences 6 or more symptoms of inattention and 6 or more hyperactive/impulsive symptoms of ADHD for at least 6 months.

Most adults with ADHD have either **inattentive** or **combined** ADHD.

If you are concerned about whether you have symptoms of ADHD, start by talking to your doctor.

Take a look at the Signs and Symptoms of ADHD on pages 3 and 4 of this brochure to see a list of the core symptoms of ADHD.

ADHD Symptoms May Appear Differently in Adults Than in Children

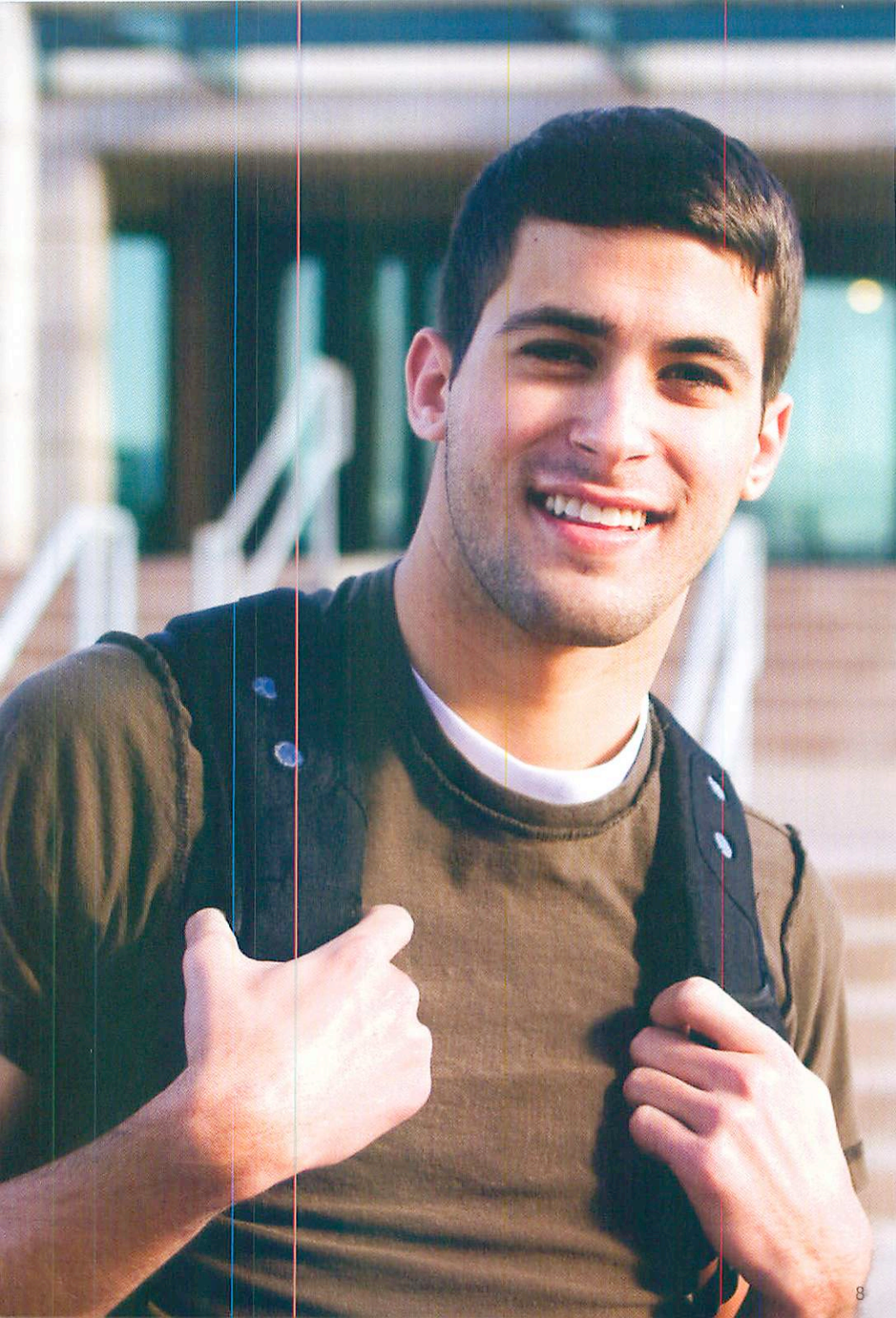
ADHD symptoms in adults may look different from those in children—more subtle and less noticeable. However, their impact on daily life should be identified in adults as in children and teens.

Here are a few examples of how the symptoms of ADHD may differ for children and adults:

ADHD Symptoms	Children With ADHD	Adults With ADHD
Inattention	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• May be easily distracted, have difficulty following instructions or completing schoolwork, and have trouble listening	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• May put things off until the last minute• May have difficulty sustaining attention to reading or paperwork• May shift activities often
Hyperactivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• May climb or run excessively, have trouble remaining seated, and have difficulty playing or working quietly	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• May be impatient, feel restless, or have difficulty engaging in quiet activities; may always need to be busy after school or work or while on vacation
Impulsivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• May find it hard to wait their turn when playing with friends, or may blurt out answers in school	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• May frequently interrupt others during college classes or at work

If you are concerned about whether you are experiencing symptoms of ADHD, fill out the Adult Symptom Questionnaire at the back of this pamphlet and talk to your doctor.


FAST FACT: ADHD can affect people of any age and IQ level.



ADHD Symptoms Can Affect Adults in Different Life Settings

ADHD symptoms can impact an adult at school, work, and home. For a diagnosis of ADHD to be made, symptoms must be present in at least 2 life settings and cause significant impairment in functioning in these settings.

Here are examples of how ADHD symptoms may affect adults in different life settings:



At School or Work	Home	In Social Situations
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Makes careless mistakes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Loses important items: assignments, keys, wallets	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Forgets important obligations and commitments
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Avoids tasks that are challenging because it's hard to stay focused for a long time	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Leaves things half done and starts another project	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Talks excessively — all the time and more than other people
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Forgets to bring assignments	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Always on the go, finds it hard to slow down	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Often butts into others' conversations and talks when others are talking
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Often interrupts or intrudes on others	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Can't sit still, or always fidgeting in chair	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Doesn't listen — often misses key parts of conversations

These symptoms are not the only criteria for diagnosing ADHD. Only a trained health care professional can diagnose ADHD.





What Causes ADHD?

The exact cause of ADHD is unknown; however, a number of factors may contribute to the development of ADHD, including the following:

Genetics

Research suggests that ADHD tends to run in families. However, this does not mean that all children in a family will have the disorder. It is not uncommon for an adult to seek help for ADHD symptoms after one of their children is diagnosed with ADHD.

Environment

Certain external factors, such as smoking during pregnancy or complications from pregnancy, delivery, or infancy, may contribute to ADHD.

Neurotransmitter Function

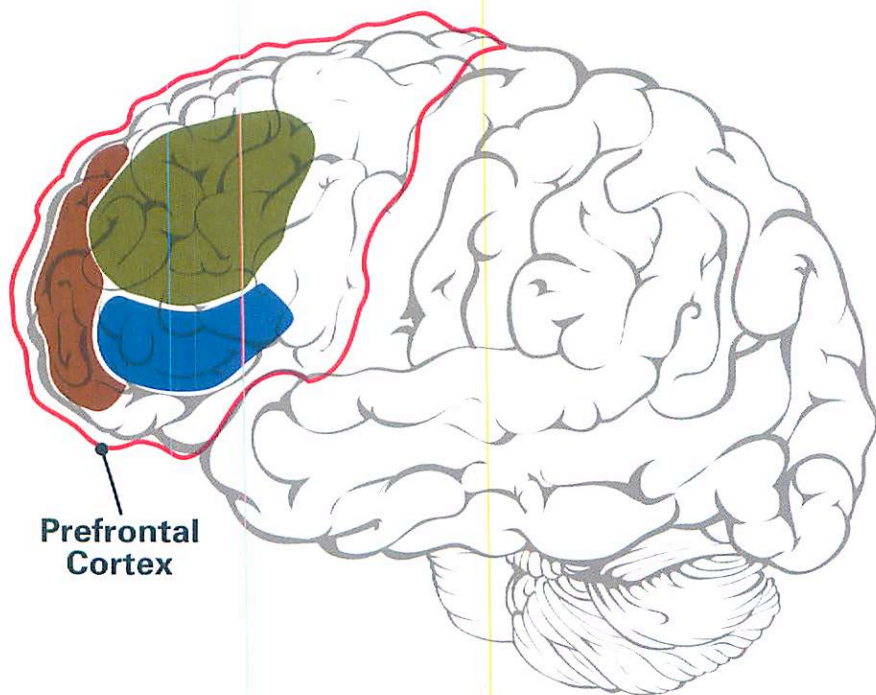
The brain uses various chemicals called neurotransmitters to help send messages across the nervous system. Research suggests that ADHD may be caused by an imbalance of neurotransmitters that may result in the inattentive and hyperactive/impulsive symptoms of ADHD.

If you are concerned about whether you have symptoms of ADHD, start by talking to your doctor.

What Parts of the Brain May Be Affected?

We do not know exactly why people develop ADHD. It may be related to problems with a part of the brain called the prefrontal cortex. The picture below shows the different parts of the prefrontal cortex that control attention, behavior, and judgment. Certain regions of the prefrontal cortex may not function properly in people with ADHD.

If areas of the prefrontal cortex shown in green, blue, or brown are impaired, a person may have symptoms such as inattention or distraction, impulsive or hyperactive behavior, and/or inappropriate behavior.





Preparing for Your Doctor's Appointment

There are important items to consider as you prepare for your initial appointment with a doctor or other health care professional. To determine whether you could have ADHD, your appointment may include the following:

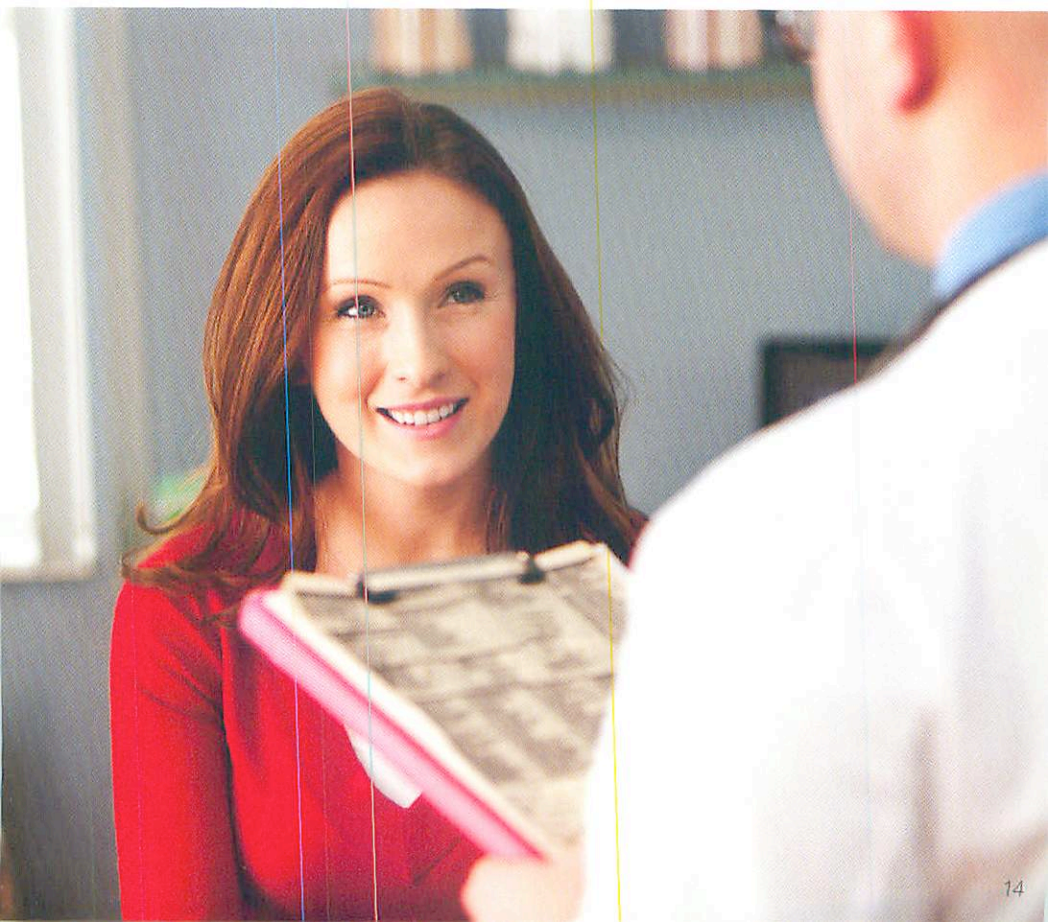
1. An interview with you to discuss specific symptoms you may be experiencing and how they impact you at school or work, at home, and in social situations.
2. An Adult ADHD Symptom Questionnaire or an ADHD rating scale.
3. Feedback from a family member, spouse, partner, or close friend who may be able to provide insight into the severity of your symptoms. If you can, bring this person with you to your appointment.
4. A review of your family medical history.
5. A review of your medical history, including whether you were ever diagnosed and treated for ADHD as a child or teenager.

Adult ADHD Symptom Questionnaire

Complete the Adult Symptom Questionnaire on page 21 of this pamphlet. This can be a useful tool to bring to your doctor to help facilitate your discussion. The questionnaire is not meant to replace a consultation with a trained health care professional. An accurate diagnosis can only be made through a clinical evaluation.

After an ADHD Diagnosis

If you are diagnosed with ADHD, your doctor will work with you to determine a treatment plan that is right for you. Regular follow-up appointments are important because they allow your doctor to assess your progress and symptoms, review treatment options and side effects, and adjust medication regimens and other components of your total treatment plan if necessary.





Comprehensive Treatment Plan for ADHD

A total treatment plan may help you manage your symptoms of ADHD once you've been diagnosed with ADHD by a trained health care professional.

Treatment for ADHD often includes medication and other treatments and interventions, such as behavioral therapy or counseling, coaching, and lifestyle modifications. You and your doctor can work closely to agree on a treatment plan that is right for you.

Medication

Several medications have been approved by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to treat ADHD and have been shown to help improve symptoms of inattention, hyperactivity, and impulsivity.

- Medicine may not be right for everyone. Talk with your doctor to determine if medication is appropriate to manage your ADHD symptoms.
- Although medication is not a cure, it may help reduce the symptoms of ADHD.
- Your doctor can work with you to find out which ADHD medication may work best for you.
- It may take time to find the right medication (or combination of medications) and dose level.
- As with all medications, ADHD medications must be used properly.
- If your doctor prescribes medication as part of the management plan, it is important that it is taken exactly as prescribed.

Behavioral Therapy, Counseling, or Other Therapy

Behavioral therapy is often recommended as part of a total ADHD treatment plan. Behavioral therapy may help with managing problems of focus, organization, motivation, and memory. A professional counselor may serve as a neutral party who may help you find solutions to your ADHD-related challenges. Counseling can be a useful therapy to help you to boost your confidence in many areas of your life. There are many organizations and services that can help after an ADHD diagnosis has been made.

ADHD Coaching

ADHD coaches can help you develop life skills that may assist you in managing your ADHD symptoms. They can provide tips and encouragement in setting goals, breaking down tasks, time management, self-monitoring, and self-reinforcement. Coaches may charge a fee or provide fee-based services to help with practical issues like getting organized.

Lifestyle Modification and Other Resources

Techniques such as using a smartphone and digital calendar to record and remember appointments may be helpful for adults with ADHD.



Frequently Asked Questions

What is ADHD?

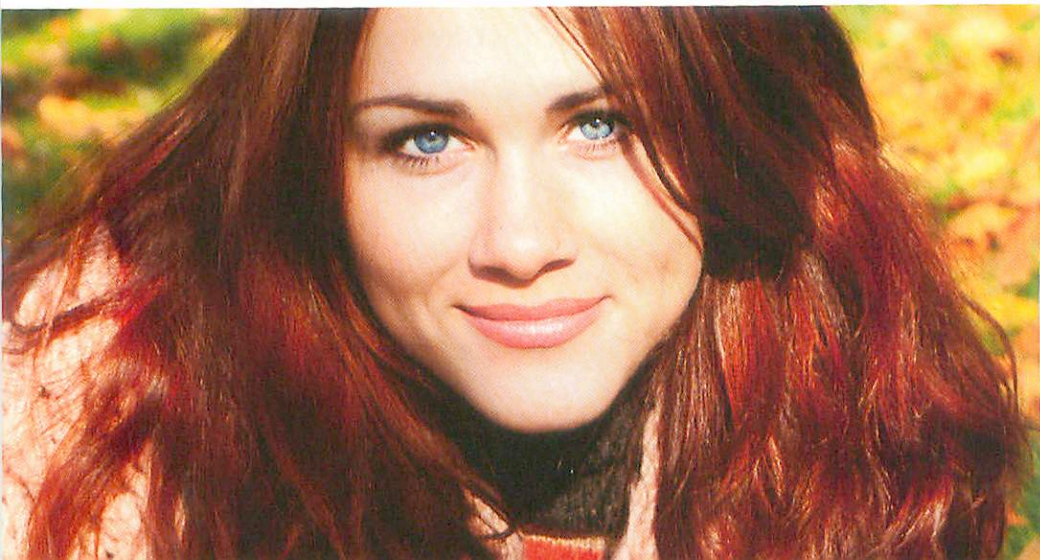
ADHD is a neurobehavioral condition that presents itself as a persistent pattern of inattention and/or hyperactivity/impulsivity leading to impairment in multiple settings such as school, work, and social situations. People with ADHD have these symptoms more frequently and severely than is typical for their peers.

Can ADHD be treated?

Yes. ADHD symptoms may be controlled with an effective treatment plan. Your treatment plan may consist of ADHD medication and/or behavioral therapy and lifestyle modifications.

Doesn't ADHD only affect children?

Many people tend to think of ADHD as a childhood disorder, but ADHD affects children, teens, and adults. In fact, in the United States, it is estimated that 10 million adults, or 4.4% of the adult population, have ADHD.



How often should my symptoms be reassessed?

Even if you are currently being treated for ADHD, follow-up appointments several times a year will help your doctor assess your progress.

I am an adult and think I have ADHD. What do I do?

Talk to your doctor. Only a doctor with expertise in treating ADHD in adults can diagnose ADHD. A qualified health care professional can also help you determine an appropriate treatment and management plan that's right for you.







Recommended Resources

Attention Deficit Disorder Association (ADDA)

PO Box 7557

Wilmington, DE 19803-9997

Phone: 1-800-939-1019

www.add.org

Children and Adults With Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (CHADD)

8181 Professional Place, Suite 150

Landover, MD 20785

Phone: 1-800-233-4050

www.chadd.org

ADHD Coaches Organization (ACO)

701 Hunting Place

Baltimore, MD 21229

Phone: 1-888-638-3999

www.adhdcoaches.org

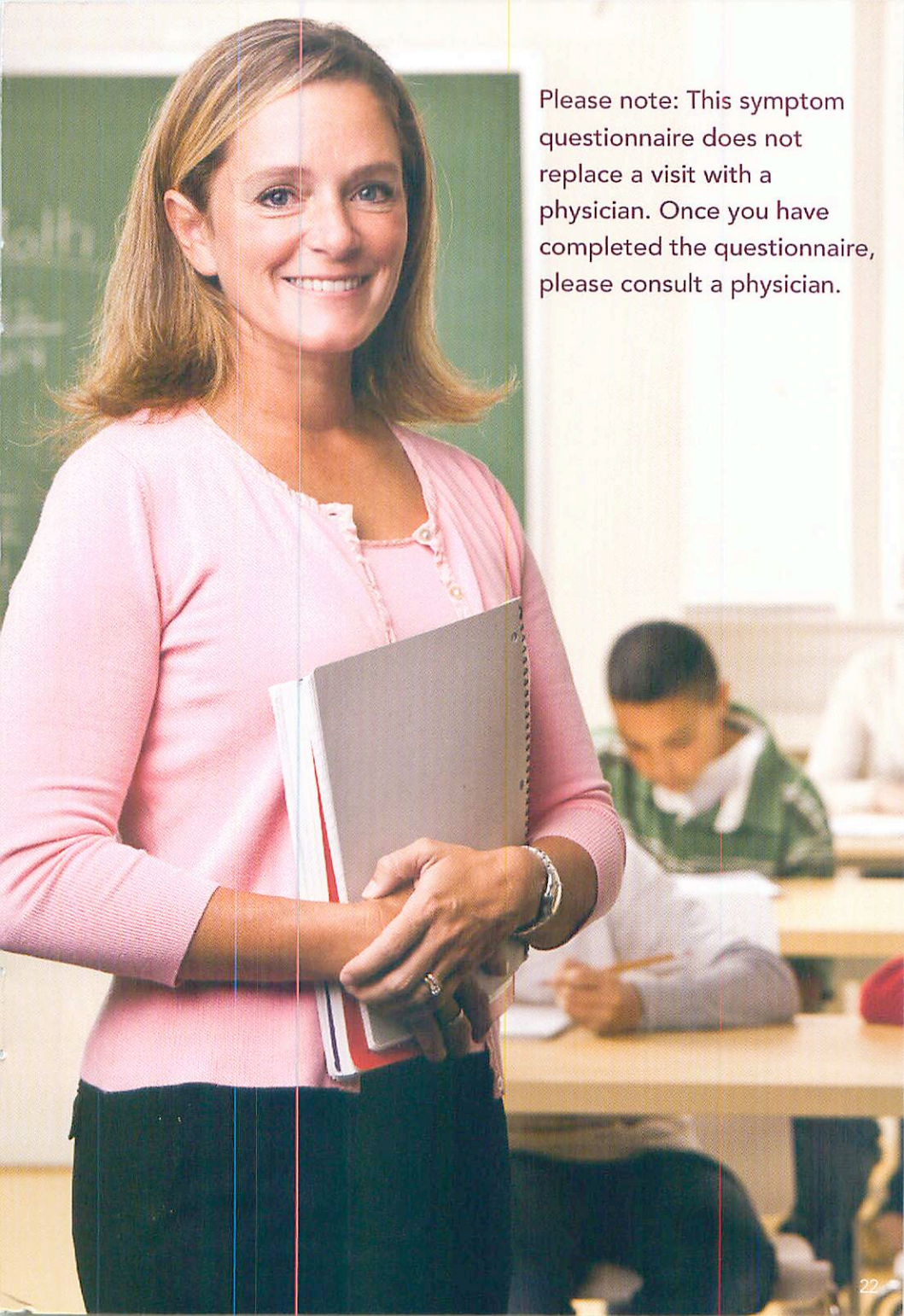
Adult ADHD Symptom Questionnaire

This screener is intended for adults aged 18 years or older.

Select the answers that best describe your actions and behaviors over the past 6 months. Upon completion, take this to your doctor to aid in a discussion about the symptoms.

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often
How often do you have trouble wrapping up the final details of a project, once the challenging parts have been done?					
How often do you have difficulty getting things in order when you have to perform a task that requires organization?					
How often do you have problems remembering appointments or obligations?					
When you have a task that requires a lot of thought, how often do you avoid or delay getting started?					
How often do you fidget or squirm with your hands or feet when you have to sit down for a long time?					
How often do you feel overly active and compelled to do things, like you were driven by a motor?					

Adapted from the Adult Self-Report Scale (ASRS) Screener from WHO Composite Diagnostic Interview
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Please note: This symptom questionnaire does not replace a visit with a physician. Once you have completed the questionnaire, please consult a physician.

ADHD and Adults

Keep this guide as a
handy resource to help
manage your ADHD.



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AME-00570 06/12

