

# ADHD

*The Roadmap to Success for Adults  
and Children with ADHD*



## Your Path to Success Starts Here

HELP STARTS  
HERE

A PLAN IN PLACE  
ADHD Treatment

- 2 Introduction
- 3 Help Starts Here
- 4 Three Subtypes of ADHD:  
One Disorder
- 5 Symptoms of ADHD  
What Causes ADHD?
- 6 ADHD Isn't Only a  
Childhood Disorder
- 7 Child and Adult  
Symptom Checklists  
Child Symptom Checklist
- 8 Adult Symptom Checklist

- 9 A Plan in Place
- 11 Finding Help
- 12 How to Choose a  
Health Care Professional
- 13 Preparing for Your  
Doctor Visit
- 14 What to Ask the Doctor
- 15 ADHD Medication
- 16 Behavior Therapy



## STAYING ON TRACK

- 17 *Staying On Track*
- 18 *Consider Setting SMART Goals to Track Your Progress*  
*ADHD Coaching*
- 19 *ADHD and Education*
- 20 *Homework Tips for Parents*
- 21 *Tips for College Students with ADHD*
- 22 *Adults with ADHD: Helping Yourself*
- 23 *Frequently Asked Questions*
- 24 *Resources*
- 25 *ADHDSupport.com*
- 26 *Roadmap to Success Program*



All children can be distracted. All children have times when they start something they don't finish: a long book, a craft project, or a household chore. However, if it is more persistent, frequent, and severe than in their peers, that may be a disorder.

**Adults as well as children can have ADHD. But today, ADHD may be treated and managed. Think of it as a journey: The more steps you take toward understanding ADHD, the better you or your child can live with it.**

This brochure and our Web site, **ADHDSupport.com**, can help you along your way. They are not intended to make a diagnosis or to take the place of a health care professional. If you think you or your child may have ADHD, see a health care professional with experience in treating ADHD.



## HELP STARTS HERE

Three Subtypes of ADHD:  
One Disorder 4

Symptoms of ADHD 5

What Causes ADHD? 5

ADHD Isn't Only a  
Childhood Disorder 6

Child and Adult  
Symptom Checklists 7



## Three Subtypes of ADHD: One Disorder

There are three subtypes of the disorder: inattentive, hyperactive-impulsive, and combined.

A professional with expertise in ADHD will want to know whether your child

- Fidgets and squirms in a seat
- Runs and climbs when it's not the time or place
- Talks excessively
- Interrupts and intrudes on others

These and other similar symptoms may add up to **ADHD—hyperactive/impulsive type.**

A professional will also want to know if your child has

- Unfinished work
- Careless mistakes
- Lost toys, homework or papers, and books
- Problems paying attention

These and other similar symptoms may add up to **ADHD—inattentive type.**

If both sets of symptoms seem to fit, the diagnosis may be **ADHD—combined type.**

### So what's the difference between ADHD, ADD, and AD/HD?

You may see these disorder names used interchangeably. ADHD (attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder) is the accurate medical term that has had several names in the past.

### Did you know?

**Research shows that ADHD tends to run in families. If you or your spouse has ADHD, there is a chance that one or more of your children may exhibit ADHD symptoms.**

## NEXT STEPS



### Learn about ADHD in your family.

The online tool **Apples on Our Family Tree** can help.



Go to [ADHDSupport.com/apples](http://ADHDSupport.com/apples)

### There's help for ADHD.

How to treat a child's ADHD needs to be determined by the health care professional involved in the child's treatment, along with the child's family. A treatment plan for ADHD may combine ADHD medication with behavioral modification.



## Symptoms of ADHD

The symptoms of ADHD are inattention and/or hyperactivity-impulsivity. A person who has ADHD may have trouble focusing, sitting still, and keeping himself or herself from interrupting.



### Some Symptoms of Inattention

- Easily distracted
- Difficulty following through on instructions in the classroom
- Disorganized; loses homework



### Some Symptoms of Hyperactivity

- Squirms, fidgets, and frequently leaves seat in classroom



### Some Symptoms of Impulsive Behavior

- Frequently interrupts others in the classroom
- Blurts out answers

## What Causes ADHD?

The exact origin of ADHD is unknown, but scientists speculate the disorder may be caused by one of the following factors.

### Neurotransmitter Function

ADHD is thought to be caused by an imbalance of two neurotransmitters—dopamine (DA) and norepinephrine (NE)—which are believed to play an important role in the ability to focus and pay attention to tasks.

### Genetics

Research suggests that ADHD tends to run in families. So when one family member is diagnosed, you may want to look for symptoms in other family members. However, this does not mean that all children in a family will have the disorder.

## NEXT STEPS



### Do you think your child may have ADHD?

Your child's doctor can help. Complete the *Child Symptom Checklist* at [ADHDSupport.com/child](http://ADHDSupport.com/child) and share your answers with the doctor. You may also use the partial checklist on page 7 to start the conversation.



## ADHD Isn't Only a Childhood Disorder

Based on a survey of adults aged 18 to 44, it is estimated that 4.4% of adults in the US may have ADHD. That's approximately 9.8 million when extrapolated across the full US adult population aged 18 and over. Many adults believe that they will outgrow ADHD, but experts estimate that up to 65% of children with ADHD experience symptoms into adulthood.

ADHD Symptoms	ADHD Symptoms in Children	ADHD Symptoms in Adults
<b>Inattention</b>	→ Easily distracted, difficulty following instructions	→ Not finishing things, poor time management
<b>Hyperactivity</b>	→ Squirms or fidgets	→ Restlessness, impatience
<b>Impulsivity</b>	→ Blurts out answers	→ Impatience/irritability/interrupting others



*Difficulties experienced by children with ADHD may continue into adulthood. Adults with ADHD may potentially experience challenges due to the disorder when compared with their non-ADHD peers.*

### ADHD may lead to potential challenges in work and life.

Individuals with ADHD may

- Have difficulty sustaining attention and be easily distracted
- Avoid tasks that require sustained mental effort
- Have difficulty organizing, lose important items, or be forgetful in daily activities
- Not follow through on tasks or duties
- Talk excessively and intrude or interrupt others

### NEXT STEPS



#### Take a Closer Look

Read and answer the questions on the following pages. If they remind you of your child or yourself, you may want to make an appointment with a doctor soon. If you're reading this in a doctor's waiting room right now, why not start the conversation today?



## Child and Adult Symptom Checklists

To make a diagnosis of ADHD, your (or your child's) doctor will consider the information you provide. Take a few moments to complete the appropriate checklist so you can provide a detailed description of your (or your child's) symptoms to your (or your child's) doctor.

### Child Symptom Checklist

Select the answer that best describes your child's actions and behaviors over the past 6 months.

Please note: This partial symptom checklist does not replace a visit with a physician. If you have questions about the checklist or your answers, please consult a physician.

#### School

Avoids or puts off tasks that require sustained mental effort or concentration

- Never
- Sometimes
- Often
- Very often

Makes careless mistakes in schoolwork

- Never
- Sometimes
- Often
- Very often

Frequently fails to finish schoolwork

- Never
- Sometimes
- Often
- Very often

Fidgets or squirms when seated, or leaves seat in classroom

- Never
- Sometimes
- Often
- Very often

Blurts out answers before questions have been completed

- Never
- Sometimes
- Often
- Very often

#### Home

Cannot seem to sit still at mealtimes

- Never
- Sometimes
- Often
- Very often

Does not seem to listen when spoken to

- Never
- Sometimes
- Often
- Very often

Loses things such as toys, pencils, or books

- Never
- Sometimes
- Often
- Very often

Runs or climbs excessively when not supposed to

- Never
- Sometimes
- Often
- Very often



[ADHDSupport.com/child](http://ADHDSupport.com/child)

Go online to fill out the complete Child Symptom Checklist. Share your answers with your child's doctor.







[ADHDSupport.com/adult](https://ADHDSupport.com/adult)

Go online to fill out the complete Adult Symptom Checklist. Then share your answers with your doctor.



## Adult Symptom Checklist

Select the answer that best describes your actions and behaviors over the past 6 months.

Please note: This partial symptom checklist does not replace a visit with a physician. If you have questions about the checklist or your answers, please consult a physician.

### No follow through:

Do you often leave things half done and start another project?

- Never
- Sometimes
- Often
- Very often

### Forgetful in daily activities:

Do you forget a lot of things in your daily routine such as appointments or obligations?

- Never
- Sometimes
- Often
- Very often

### Can't organize:

Does difficulty in planning lead to procrastination and putting off tasks until the last moment possible?

- Never
- Sometimes
- Often
- Very often

### Can't work quietly:

Do you feel agitated during leisure activities?

- Never
- Sometimes
- Often
- Very often

### Lose important items:

Do you lose important items such as work papers, keys or wallet more often than others?

- Never
- Sometimes
- Often
- Very often

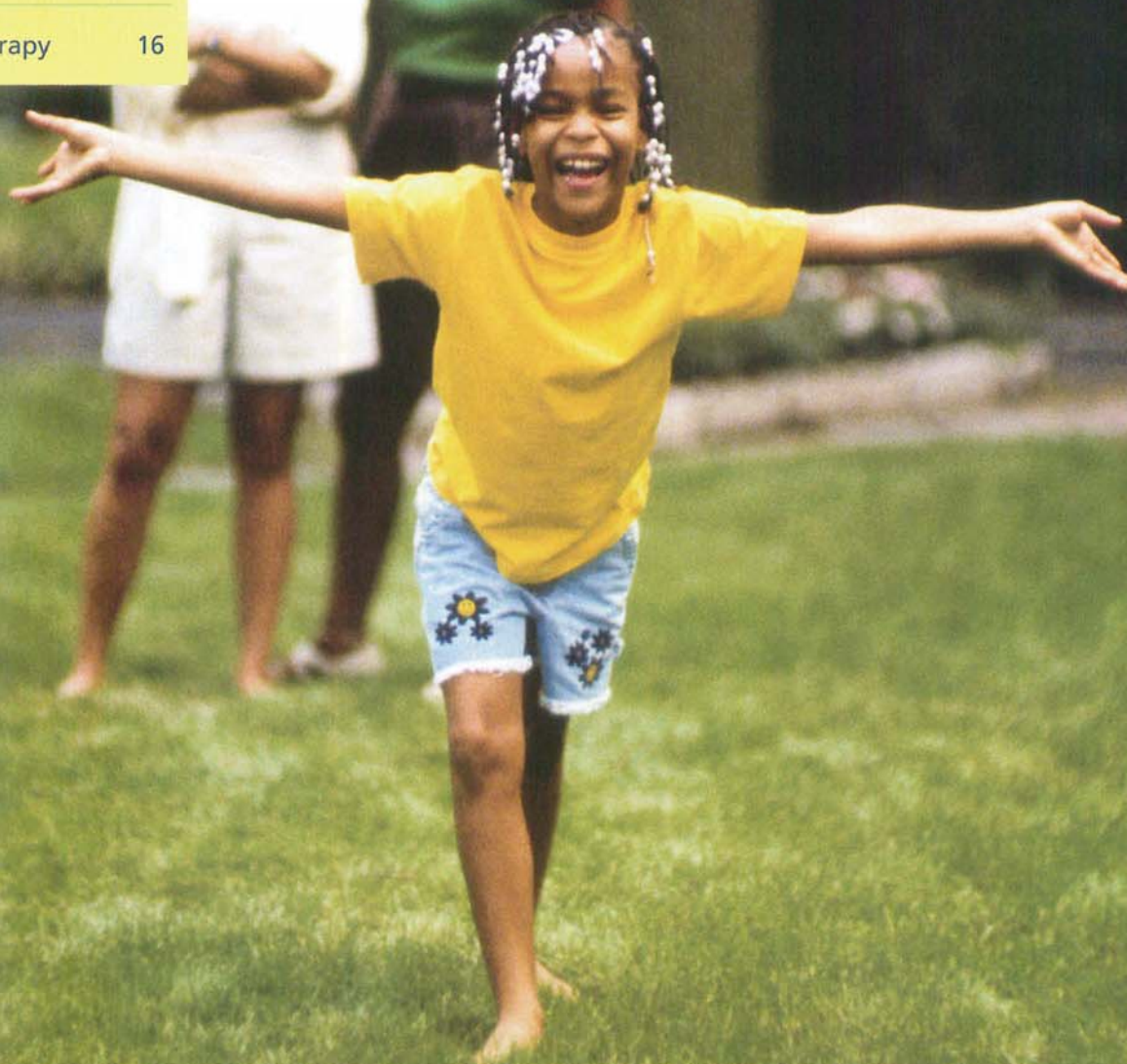
### Intrudes/Interrupts others:

Do you talk when others are talking, without waiting until you are acknowledged?

- Never
- Sometimes
- Often
- Very often

A PLAN IN PLACE  
ADHD Treatment

Finding Help	11
How to Choose a Health Care Professional	12
Preparing for Your Doctor Visit	13
What to Ask the Doctor	14
ADHD Medication	15
Behavior Therapy	16





To manage ADHD symptoms, you may need a plan. Ready to move forward? For many people with ADHD, the path to success looks something like this.

- Find help
- Get an evaluation
- Make a total treatment plan
- Stay strong in carrying out the plan

This section will introduce you to each of these steps. By learning all you can about ADHD, you're well on your way.





*There are many professionals who can help manage your ADHD. And you can find them right in your own community.*



## NEXT STEPS



### **Find a doctor with experience diagnosing and treating ADHD.**

Ready for help? You may want to start by talking with your own doctor or pediatrician. If you don't already know someone, use the online Doctor Finder to locate doctors in your area who have experience with ADHD.

Go to [ADHDSupport.com/doctors](http://ADHDSupport.com/doctors)

## Finding Help

School counselors, social workers, and other professionals can help you navigate educational, medical, and insurance systems. Therapists and psychologists may diagnose ADHD and help with behavior modification and goal setting. In most states, however, only medical doctors may diagnose and prescribe medicine for ADHD.

Medical doctors include

- Family doctors
- Pediatricians
- Psychiatrists
- Child psychiatrists
- Neurologists

There are organizations and services that can help after a diagnosis has been made. These include the Attention Deficit Disorder Association (ADDA) and Children and Adults with Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (CHADD). See page 24.



## How to Choose a Health Care Professional

It's worth the effort to find a qualified health care professional for you or your child.

If you do a little interviewing up front, you increase your chances of finding a professional best suited to meet the needs of you or your child—which means you're more likely to be satisfied with the experience.

You may find it helpful to talk to other parents to find out what they like—and don't like—about the professionals they've seen for their child's ADHD. Use their thoughts to develop your own list of what is important to you.

Your "Good Health Care Professional List" might include your answers to questions like these.

- How much experience does this person have with ADHD?
- What methods does this person use to treat ADHD?
- What insurance plans does this office accept?
- Does this person and the staff make me feel at ease?

Collect the names of two or three professionals. Call each one and request a time to ask about the items on your list, either in person or on the phone.

### NEXT STEPS



**Preparing for your visit is important. Complete your or your child's history now.**

You can help the doctor by completing a full Symptom Checklist for your child or yourself. These checklists are available online at [ADHDSupport.com/resources](http://ADHDSupport.com/resources)





*The more information the doctor has, the more reliable the diagnosis.*

## Preparing for Your Doctor Visit

**You've made the doctor's appointment, but your work doesn't end there. Make sure to go to the appointment prepared. Here are some suggestions.**

- Complete the ADHD Checklist
- Gather report cards from teachers. If an adult, gather report cards from the school years, in addition to any job performance reviews. The feedback can help the physician
- Spend a few minutes reviewing the Doctor Discussion Guide questions provided online and jot down any of your own, so you don't forget once you're in the doctor's office
- Be prepared to talk about any medications you or your child is currently taking
- Take inventory of your or your child's symptoms and be prepared to discuss them
- Take someone with you. For adults, take a significant other or friend who may hear something that maybe you did not, or remember to ask a question that might not have occurred to you
- Complete the partial Child or Adult Checklist on pages 7 and 8, or the full checklists at [ADHDSupport.com/resources](https://ADHDSupport.com/resources)
- Review the Doctor Discussion Guide questions at [ADHDSupport.com/guide](https://ADHDSupport.com/guide)



## What to Ask the Doctor

The doctor will discuss treatment options with you and advise you on which medication might be best. You may want to ask the following questions.

- Will the ADHD medication effectively treat the core symptoms of ADHD: inattention, hyperactivity, and impulsivity?
- What type of medication is it?
- What are common side effects associated with the medication?
- What is your experience in treating ADHD?
- Does the medication come in different dosage strengths in order to match exactly the right dosage for the patient?
- Is there an option for children who can't swallow pills?
- What other information should be considered prior to starting therapy?



*A doctor may consider the information you provide as well as input from family and teachers.*

### NEXT STEPS



#### **Helpful Doctor Discussion Guide.**

Determining the right treatment plan starts with asking your doctor some key questions. Learn what some of those questions are by visiting [ADHDSupport.com/guide](http://ADHDSupport.com/guide)



## NEXT STEPS



### Learn more about ADHD and treatment options.

Visit [ADHDSupport.com](http://ADHDSupport.com) for tips on how to:

- Focus at work, school, or home
- Start, organize, and finish projects
- Develop and stick to routines
- Feel less impatient and restless
- Take turns or wait patiently
- Filter out distractions
- Think before acting
- Interrupt others less
- Remember meetings or appointments
- Keep track of important items

## ADHD Medication

The symptoms of ADHD are inattention, hyperactivity, and impulsivity: A person who has ADHD may have trouble focusing, sitting still, and keeping himself or herself from interrupting.

Attention and behavior are controlled by signals that move through the brain, from one cell to another.

To carry signals from one cell to another, the brain makes various kinds of chemicals. These are natural chemicals. With enough natural chemicals in the right places, brain cells communicate.

Scientists believe that when the brain fills the spaces between cells with natural chemicals, it's like building a bridge for information to pass smoothly.

ADHD medications, both stimulants and nonstimulants, are thought to build a better bridge for passing information.





## Behavior Therapy

Behavior modification, also called behavior therapy, is often recommended as part of a total treatment plan for people with ADHD. It is based on rewarding an individual for desired behavior and having consequences for undesired behavior.

Behavior modification for ADHD can help build self-esteem and guide the patient with ADHD toward good, appropriate behaviors. It is also important to make frequent changes in the plan, so that it remains fresh and motivating.

Parents and teachers can receive training to learn how to implement techniques and strategies of behavior therapy for ADHD. Parent training typically begins with 8 to 12 weekly group sessions with a trained therapist. A typical program aims to improve the parents' or caregivers' understanding of the child's behavior and teaches them skills to deal with the behavioral difficulties posed by ADHD. Your child's doctor, psychologist, or behavioral specialist may assist you in developing a personal plan for your child.

Organizational strategies can help adults with life-skills building. ADHD or life coaches are able to help develop the skills, which may assist with better managing ADHD symptoms.

*For more tips and tools, visit [ADHDSupport.com/tips](http://ADHDSupport.com/tips)*

### Tips for Yourself

- Allow time each day to organize your day
- Communicate your needs to your bosses and coworkers
- Develop a system of small tasks and immediate rewards

### Learn more about behavior modification for adults and children.

There may be services available through your community mental health system that can support you in the development and implementation of a behavior management program in your home at no cost to you.

Choose a goal that you feel can be accomplished quickly. This quick success can help feed the cycle of success.

*Try to catch your child being good. Praising your child strengthens his or her positive behaviors and your relationship.*



## STAYING ON TRACK

Consider Setting SMART Goals to Track Your Progress	18
ADHD Coaching	18
ADHD and Education	19
Homework Tips for Parents	20
Tips for College Students with ADHD	21
Adults with ADHD: Helping Yourself	22
Frequently Asked Questions	23
Resources	24
ADHDSupport.com	25
Roadmap to Success Program	26



## Consider Setting SMART Goals to Track Your Progress

**SMART goals are Specific, Measurable, Agreed Upon, Realistic, and Timely.**

- **Specific:** Develop specific goals that are clearly stated
- **Measurable:** A goal is measurable if you can clearly determine if progress is being made toward reaching it
- **Agreed Upon:** Talk about the goal with your child—or if it's your own goal, with a friend and agree upon your actions
- **Realistic:** The goals should be within reach
- **Timely:** A timely goal is one that can be achieved within a time frame that is meaningful

### NEXT STEPS



Help to improve your child's social skills at [ADHDSupport.com/socialskills](https://ADHDSupport.com/socialskills)

## ADHD Coaching

**If you think you want additional expertise and help working with your child, you may want to consider adding a professional ADHD coach to your child's treatment plan.**

- Determine your child's strengths and weaknesses, where your child stands now, and ways to further develop your child's talents and abilities
- Encourage future successes and help your child see his or her progress to help build self-confidence
- Define and set goals, including a set of practical actions to help your child achieve those goals
- Suggest positive parenting skills you may not yet have tried that may help you get results

### Did you know?

**Organizational strategies can also help you with life-skills building. ADHD or life coaches are able to help you develop these skills, which may assist you with better managing your or your child's ADHD symptoms.**



## ADHD and Education

The questions below may be helpful to you as you talk with your child's teachers. You may want to take a copy for each teacher so that you're all on the same page when it comes to managing your child's ADHD symptoms.

- How can we help my child stay organized with homework and get assignments completed on time?
- Are assignments too big for my child? Would it be possible to break them down into smaller, more manageable steps?
- How can I offer positive reinforcement for improved behavior in the classroom?
- Could the school counselor/psychologist provide support in addition to what you're doing in the classroom?
- Is there extra work you'd suggest I do with my child after school or on weekends to improve his or her progress and skills?
- Do you think a change in seating would help my child stay focused?
- Are you seeing progress in my child's attention and behavior?
- Would you be willing to fill out symptom checklists to help monitor my child's progress on a weekly basis?
- Are there areas/times of day that my child's progress seems to fluctuate?

### Here are some things you can do right now.

- Go to [ADHDSupport.com/teacher](http://ADHDSupport.com/teacher) and print the Teacher Discussion Guide. Make an appointment with your child's teachers and take the guide with you—it's a good conversation starter
- Ask the teachers for two textbooks. Having one for home and one for school can help a forgetful child
- Ask for advance notice of homework assignments and test dates so you can remind your child

## NEXT STEPS



Learn more about your child's educational rights. Go to [ADHDSupport.com/education](http://ADHDSupport.com/education)

Also see Resources on page 24.

Please note that when requesting additional help in school for your child, you MUST do so in writing. Once the request is in writing, the school then has 60 days in which to assess your child's situation. Unless your request is in writing, it may not be considered valid. Take your written letter (typed is preferred, but a clearly handwritten letter would be OK also) to the administrative offices at your child's school, and be sure to get it dated and signed on the day it was received by the school's administrators. Also be sure to keep a copy for yourself.

Your child's school should also have brochures or handouts, explaining what kind of rights your child has. Ask for whatever paperwork they have available.





*Helping your child at school means helping him or her at home.*

## Homework Tips for Parents

It's important that you take an active role in your child's homework assignments.

### Here are some ways you can help.

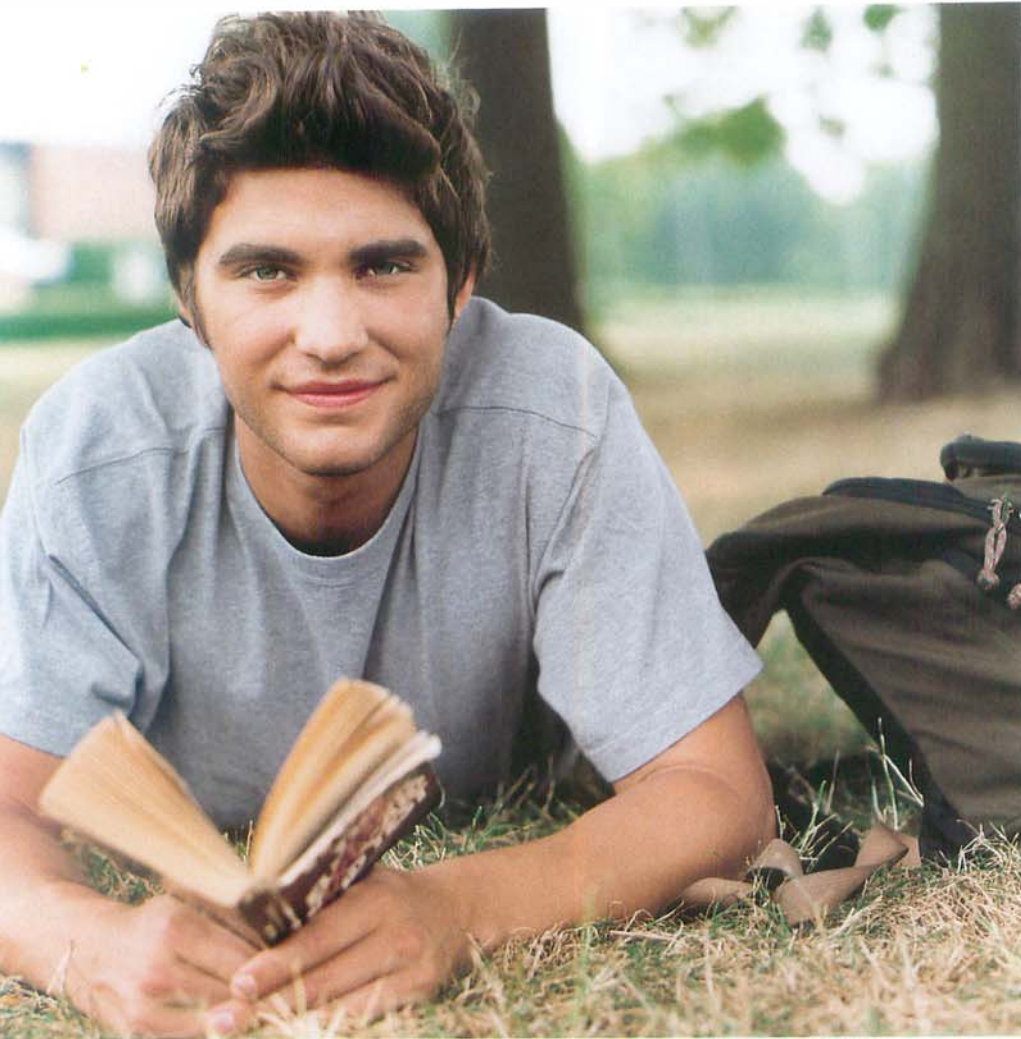
- Create a schedule. Try to follow the same routine every day
- Hang a copy of the schedule to provide visual reinforcement
- Try to keep tasks simple. This way your child has a better chance of completing each task—this can provide a sense of accomplishment
- Help your child get organized
- Always try to use brief and clear directions
- Limit distractions. It helps to have the TV, radio, and computer games off when your child is performing tasks, especially homework

### NEXT STEPS



#### Download the helpful Homework Planner.

Day after day, it can help your child organize his or her time, stay focused, and complete all assignments. Download the Homework Planner PDF now at [ADHDSupport.com/homework](http://ADHDSupport.com/homework)



*Talk with your professors. They may be willing to work with you and allow more time for tests and assignments.*

## NEXT STEPS



### **Consider an ADHD Coach.**

He or she can help you develop a successful study routine and build the organizational skills you'll need throughout college. Learn more at [ADHDSupport.com/coach](http://ADHDSupport.com/coach)

## Tips for College Students with ADHD

Starting college soon? Already enrolled? Here are some things to keep in mind as you begin your classes.

- Be honest with yourself about your study habits, strengths, and weaknesses
- Keep your interests in mind. You're more likely to earn good grades in a class you find interesting than in one that bores you. For classes that don't get you excited (but you have to take), try waiting a semester before starting them. Or take them one semester at a time, if possible
- Get a tutor. Free tutoring may be available. If the class is especially hard, start working with a tutor before you fall behind
- Get involved with extracurricular activities. You don't have to sacrifice involvement in sports, clubs, or other activities you enjoy. Regular exercise is a great way to work off extra energy, unwind after a stressful day, and, of course, stay in shape
- Get registered with your campus Office of Disability Services. Take your current high school IEP or 504 Plan with you. For information on your rights, see ADHD and Education on page 19



## Adults with ADHD: Helping Yourself

Who doesn't have trouble staying focused and organized in daily life? These things can be especially hard for adults with ADHD. Here are some tips that may help you at home and at work.

- Educate yourself about ADHD through books, articles, and information from ADHD organizations. See Resources on page 24
- Everything has a home. You need to have a place for most things. It will help simplify matters if you learn to keep certain items in certain places

- Spend 15 minutes a day decreasing clutter. Make time each day or at least each week to organize your stuff. The longer you delay, the larger those piles will become
- Develop a system of small tasks and immediate rewards. What's the main project you have to do at work right now? Big tasks may intimidate a person with ADHD. That's why so many waste time on trivial little tasks

What's the answer? Making your big task into a series of small tasks. You can decide how small the segments need to be, depending on your usual attention span. But it would not be unreasonable to work on a report one page at a time or some other assignment a half hour at a time.





## Frequently Asked Questions

### What is ADHD?

A disorder with symptoms of inattention and/or hyperactivity-impulsivity or a combination of all three symptoms. The behaviors are inconsistent with the developmental level expected at the person's age.

### Can ADHD be treated?

Research has shown that one of the most effective treatment plans for ADHD is one that combines ADHD medication with behavioral modification.

### How do I start thinking about getting help?

See Resources on page 24 or go to [ADHDSupport.com/doctors](http://ADHDSupport.com/doctors). They may help you find professionals with ADHD expertise. Also, your child's school, the human resources department at work, your place of worship, and clinics may have lists of local resources.

### NEXT STEPS



For more Frequently Asked Questions, go to [ADHDSupport.com/faq](http://ADHDSupport.com/faq)







## Resources

Attention Deficit Disorder Association (ADDA)

PO Box 7557

Wilmington, Delaware 19803

Phone: 1-800-939-1019

Fax: 1-800-939-1019

Web site: [add.org](http://add.org)

Shire US Inc.

[ADHDSupport.com](http://ADHDSupport.com)

1-800-828-2088

Children and Adults with Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder

(CHADD)

8181 Professional Place

Suite 150

Landover, Maryland 20785

Phone: 1-301-306-7070

or 1-800-233-4050

Fax: 1-301-306-7090

Web site: [chadd.org](http://chadd.org)

Learning Disabilities Association of America (LDA)

4156 Library Road

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15234

Phone: 1-412-341-1515

Fax: 1-412-344-0224

These Web sites are also great resources to find ADHD information.

[aacap.org](http://aacap.org)

[apa.org](http://apa.org)

[help4adhd.org](http://help4adhd.org)

[mentalhealth.org](http://mentalhealth.org)

For a list of books and videos, check out [addwarehouse.com](http://addwarehouse.com)



## Find Your Own Path to Success at [ADHDSupport.com](http://ADHDSupport.com)

Log on today and get started. You'll find a great deal of ADHD support and resources along the way— including free downloadable tools, videos, tips, discussion guides, medical information, and much more for adults and children with ADHD.



## Join the Roadmap to Success Program Today

As a member of the free Roadmap to Success Program, you can get the latest tips and information about ADHD in adults and children.

You'll receive

- Regular e-mails with tips that you choose—from school success for your child to lifestyle modifications for adults and families
- The newest information about ADHD diagnosis, treatment, and management
- Access to a directory of other ADHD individuals, so you can connect with other people in your area with similar situations
- Practical real-world strategies to help you put a success plan in place

**Enroll in this free ADHD e-mail support program today. Sign up now at [ADHDSupport.com/join](http://ADHDSupport.com/join)**



Get started at [ADHDSupport.com/join](http://ADHDSupport.com/join)

### Join the Roadmap to Success Program

You'll find tips, advice, and expert ideas for managing ADHD in children and adults.

**SIGN UP NOW**