



ADHD

What is ADHD?

Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder affects the brain and results in hyperactivity, impulsivity and/or inattention, which interfere with school or work performance and social interactions. It can be categorized into 3 types:

- ADHD – hyperactive type
- ADHD – inattentive type
- ADHD – combined type

What are the symptoms?

Hyperactivity:

- Fidgeting with hands or feet
- Running and constant motion
- Trouble staying in seat in class
- Excessive talking
- Difficulty taking turns

Inattention:

- Difficulty focusing and staying on task
- Making careless mistakes
- Forgetting homework and chores
- Distracted easily
- Not listening when spoke to or in class

How is ADHD diagnosed?

When you come to the appointment, we will discuss your child's symptoms to help make the diagnosis. For older children, symptoms have to be present before age 12 to make a diagnosis of ADHD. We will also have you complete a parent Vanderbilt survey and have you give teacher Vanderbilt surveys to 2 teachers, who know your child well enough to complete the survey. These forms are available on our website www.caringhandspediatrics.com under forms→ADHD, if you want to complete these and bring them in before the appointment.

How is ADHD treated?

- Behavioral therapy – helps a person change behavior. They may work on things like organizational skills, social interactions, and controlling impulsive behaviors.
- Medications – can help increase a person's ability to focus and decrease impulsivity.

What medications are used to treat ADHD?

Medications for ADHD can be divided into Stimulants and Non-Stimulants. Stimulants include medications like Ritalin, Concerta, and Adderall. Medications in this category work by increasing

brain levels of dopamine and norepinephrine, which affect thinking and attention. Some side effects of stimulants include appetite suppression, insomnia, irritability, abdominal pain, and tics. They can also raise the blood pressure and heart rate. People with high blood pressure, heart defects, glaucoma, kidney or liver disease may not be able to take stimulant medications. Non-stimulant medications include medications like Strattera and Intuniv. They are often used when patients have side effects from the stimulants. Sometimes they are used in combination with the stimulants, when the stimulants are not resulting in adequate effectiveness.

What happens after my child is started on medications?

Typically, we schedule an appointment for a medication check 3 weeks after starting medications or after making a change to the medications. At the med checks, we monitor the child's growth, blood pressure and heart rate. We also ask about side effects and effectiveness of the medication to see if the dose or medication needs to be changed. After an appropriate medication and dose is achieved, the child is seen every 3-4 months for medication checks.

Because stimulants are controlled substances, we cannot electronically prescribe them or call them into the pharmacy. In addition, they can only be written for a 30-day supply, unless your insurance company states otherwise. We will give you paper scripts, which you can take to the pharmacy to be filled. If your child is not due for a med check, but needs a refill, you can send a medication refill request through our patient portal and we can either mail you the script or leave it at the front desk for you to pick up. Please make these requests 1 week before the medication runs out to ensure adequate time for the script to arrive in the mail.