

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) in Children: Care Instructions



Overview

Children with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) often have problems paying attention and focusing on tasks. They sometimes act without thinking. Some children also fidget or cannot sit still and have lots of energy. This common disorder can continue into adulthood.

The exact cause of ADHD is not clear, although it seems to run in families. ADHD is not caused by eating too much sugar or by food additives, allergies, or immunizations.

Medicines, counseling, and extra support at home and at school can help your child succeed. Your child's doctor will want to see your child regularly.

Follow-up care is a key part of your child's treatment and safety. Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor if your child is having problems. It's also a good idea to know your child's test results and keep a list of the medicines your child takes.

How can you care for your child at home?

Information

- Learn about ADHD. This will help you and your family better understand how to help your child.
- Ask your child's doctor or teacher about parenting classes and books.
- Look for a support group for parents of children with ADHD.

At home

- Praise and reward your child for positive behavior. This should directly follow your child's positive behavior.
- Give your child lots of attention and affection. Spend time with your child doing activities you both enjoy.
- Step back and let your child learn cause and effect when possible. For example, let your child go without a coat when they resist taking one. Your child will learn that going out in cold weather without a coat is a poor decision.
- Use time-outs or the loss of a privilege to discipline your child.

- Try to keep a regular schedule for meals, naps, and bedtime. Some children with ADHD have a hard time with change.
- Give instructions clearly. Break tasks into simple steps. Give one instruction at a time.
- Try to be patient and calm around your child. Your child may act without thinking, so try not to get angry.
- Tell your child exactly what you expect from them ahead of time. For example, when you plan to go grocery shopping, tell your child that they must stay at your side.
- Do not put your child into situations that may be overwhelming. For example, do not take your child to events that require quiet sitting for several hours.
- Find a counselor you and your child like and can relate to. Counseling can help children learn ways to deal with problems. Children can also talk about their feelings and deal with stress.
- Look for activities—art projects, sports, music or dance lessons—that your child likes and can do well. This can help boost your child's self-esteem.

At school

- Ask your child's teacher if your child needs extra help at school.
- Help your child organize their school work. Show them how to use checklists and reminders to keep on track.
- Work with teachers and other school personnel. Good communication can help your child do better in school.

Medicines

- Have your child take medicines exactly as prescribed. Call your doctor if you think your child is having a problem with a medicine. You will get more details on the specific medicines your doctor prescribes.
- If your child misses a dose, do not give your child extra doses to catch up.
- Keep close track of your child's medicines. Some medicines for ADHD can be misused by others.

When should you call for help?

call anytime you think your child may need emergency care. For example, call if:

- You feel your child cannot stop from hurting themselves or someone else.

Where to get help 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

If your child talks about suicide, self-harm, a mental health crisis, a substance use crisis, or any other kind of emotional distress, get help right away. You can:

- Call the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline at 988.
- Call 1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255).
- Text HOME to 741741 to access the Crisis Text Line.

Consider saving these numbers in your phone.

Go to [988lifeline.org](https://www.988lifeline.org) for more information or to chat online.

Watch closely for changes in your child's health, and be sure to contact your doctor if:

- Your child is having problems with behavior at school or with school work.
- Your child has problems making or keeping friends.

you have questions about a medical condition or this instruction, always ask your healthcare professional. Healthwise, Incorporated disclaims any warranty or liability for your use of this information.