





# HOW DO YOU KNOW IF YOU OR YOUR CHILD HAS ADHD?

As October marks National Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) Month, we look at how to identify the disorder.

## ADHD causes two main types of behavioural problems:

 Inattentiveness (not paying attention)

 Hyperactivity and impulsiveness

Most people have issues in both areas however, sometimes people just struggle with inattentiveness and this is called attention deficit disorder (ADD). It sometimes goes unnoticed as the symptoms can be less obvious.

## Symptoms in children and teenagers

### Inattentiveness

- 1 Forgetful and often losing things
- 2 Appears to not listen to or carry out instructions
- 3 Can't focus on tasks that are tedious or take up time
- 4 Struggles to organise task
- 5 Making careless mistakes – for example, in schoolwork
- 6 Easily distracted and can't focus on one thing for too long
- 7 Constantly changes activity or task

### Hyperactivity and impulsiveness

The main signs of hyperactivity and impulsiveness are:


- 1 Being unable to sit still, especially in calm or quiet surroundings
- 2 Constantly fidgeting
- 3 Being unable to concentrate on tasks
- 4 Excessive physical movement
- 5 Excessive talking
- 6 Being unable to wait their turn
- 7 Acting without thinking
- 8 Interrupting conversations
- 9 Little or no sense of danger


These symptoms can cause significant problems in a child's life, such as underachievement at school, poor social interaction with other children and adults, and problems with discipline.

## Symptoms in adults

There is less research on adults with ADHD than there is on children however, ADHD would have started in childhood and stayed through the teenage years and adulthood. Adults don't **develop** ADHD when they are adults.

Specialists believe that the WAY symptoms affect children might be difficult in adults and some symptoms are more subtle:

 Hyperactivity tends to decrease in adults,

 Inattentiveness tends to get worse as the pressures of adult life increase.

### Hyperactivity and impulsiveness

The main signs of hyperactivity and impulsiveness are:

- 1 Carelessness and lack of attention to detail
- 2 Continually starting new tasks before finishing old ones
- 3 Poor organisational skills
- 4 Inability to focus or prioritise
- 5 Continually losing or misplacing things
- 6 Forgetfulness
- 7 Restlessness and edginess
- 8 Difficulty keeping quiet, and speaking out of turn
- 9 Blurting out responses and often interrupting others
- 10 Mood swings, irritability and a quick temper
- 11 Inability to deal with stress
- 12 Extreme impatience
- 13 Taking risks in activities, often with little or no regard for personal safety or the safety of others – for example, driving dangerously

## Why it's important to treat and diagnose ADHD

If left untreated or misdiagnosed, Psychiatrist Dr Renata Schoeman says the consequences of adult ADHD can have a serious affect on long-term health and quality of life. "Many adults with ADHD go untreated for the majority of their lives. This can lead to significant increases in the risk for other psychiatric conditions such as anxiety and mood disorder as well as substance abuse.

"In the work environment their poor time management, goal setting, stress management and organisational skills can have a considerable impact on their colleagues and employers."

### Who to call:

A psychologist or psychiatrist will be able to provide support and treatment. If you think that you or a family member has ADHD, call the EAP to be referred to a specialist.

## Remember!

For more information, support and advice feel free to reach out to us on:

**TOLL-FREE NUMBER:** 0800 000 408  
**EMAIL:** transneteap@mhg.co.za  
**SMS** or send a please call me: 083 450 0508

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