



How is ADHD Diagnosed?

There is no simple test to determine whether your child has ADHD, but your paediatrician, with the assistance of other health care professionals can make an accurate diagnosis after detailed assessments.

These may include a physical examination (which can help rule out other possible causes for the symptoms), a series of interviews with you and /or your child and interviews or reports from other significant people, such as partners, parents and teachers.

There are a number of tests that can help to decide whether an individual has ADHD: The Achenbach Child Behaviour Checklist, Conner's Teacher and Parent Rating Scales, the Edelbrock Child Attention Problems Rating Scale and Barley and DuPaul's ADHD Rating Scale are all questionnaires that may be completed by parents and teachers.

When using the DSM-5, a diagnosis of ADHD in children will depend on a set of strict criteria. A child must have six or more of two sets of symptoms: inattentiveness and hyperactivity/impulsiveness.

In addition, to be diagnosed with ADHD:

- The child must have been displaying symptoms continuously for at least six months.
- Symptoms must have been seen before the age of 12.
- ADHD symptoms must be evident in at least two different settings - for example, at home and at school (to rule out the possibility that the behaviour is just a reaction to certain teachers or parental control).
- The symptoms will be such that they make their lives of the child considerably more difficult on a social, academic or occupational level.
- The child's symptoms should not just be part of a developmental disorder or a difficult phase which could be better accounted for by another condition.

Since 2013 it has been possible for adolescents and adults to be given an ADHD diagnosis. Individuals over 17 years who are under assessment need to be showing at least five of the symptoms from both groups. The descriptive criteria have been widened to apply to adults as well as children. However for a diagnosis the symptom must have been present from childhood (before age 12).

ADHD can present as mild, moderate or severe, and can be managed by a range of strategies including psychological and using medication. There is strong evidence to show that parent/carer workshops can also be very beneficial to outcomes for young people with ADHD.

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