

ADHD—Common Questions about Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

Q: Will my child outgrow ADHD? What about a cure?

A: ADHD continues into adulthood in most cases. However, by developing their strengths, structuring their environments, and using medication when needed, adults with ADHD can lead very productive lives. ADHD doesn't need to interfere with their daily lives.

There is no cure for ADHD at this time, but some children learn to compensate enough that they can manage without any medication. Research is ongoing to learn more about the role of the brain in people with ADHD, long-term outcomes for people with ADHD, and the best ways to treat the disorder.

Q: Why do so many children have ADHD?

A: The number of children getting treatment for ADHD has risen. It is not clear whether more children have ADHD or more children with ADHD are now receiving a diagnosis of ADHD and treatment. Also, more children with ADHD are getting treatment for a longer period. ADHD is one of the most common and most studied behavioral conditions of childhood.

Because of more awareness and better ways to diagnose and treat ADHD, more children are being helped.

Q: Are schools prescribing children ADHD medication?

A: Teachers are often the first to notice signs of possible ADHD. However, only medical doctors with parental consent can prescribe medications to treat ADHD. The diagnosis of ADHD should follow a careful process.

Q: Can children get high on stimulant medications?

A: There is no evidence that children can get high on stimulant drugs such as methylphenidate and amphetamine when taken as directed by a doctor. At therapeutic doses, these drugs also do not sedate or tranquilize children and do not increase the risk for substance use.

However, stimulants are classified as Schedule II drugs by the US Drug Enforcement Administration because there is potential for misuse of this class of medication. If your child is taking medication, it is always best to supervise use of the medication closely. Atomoxetine, guanfacine, and clonidine are not Schedule II drugs because they don't have potential for misuse.

Q: Will use of stimulant medications lead to illegal drug or alcohol use?

A: People with ADHD who are taking stimulants are not more likely to use other drugs and may actually be less likely. Children and teens who have ADHD combined with other conditions may face a higher risk for drug and alcohol use regardless of the medication used. For most children, stimulant medications are a safe and effective way to reduce ADHD symptoms. Just as glasses focus people's eyesight so they can see better, these medications help children with ADHD focus their thoughts better and ignore distractions. This makes them more able to pay attention and control their activity.

Visit [HealthyChildren.org](https://www.healthychildren.org) for more information.

Adapted from the American Academy of Pediatrics patient education booklet, *Understanding ADHD: Information for Parents About Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder*.

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