

ADHD—What are the Symptoms of Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder?

Are you concerned your child may have attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)? Read on for information from the American Academy of Pediatrics about the symptoms and types of ADHD.

What are the symptoms of ADHD?

Children with ADHD have symptoms that fall into 3 groups: inattention, hyperactivity, and impulsivity. See Table 1.

| Table 1. Symptoms of ADHD | |
|---------------------------|--|
| Symptom | How a Child With This Symptom May Behave |
| Inattention | Often has a hard time paying attention; daydreams |
| | Often does not seem to listen |
| | Is easily distracted from work or play |
| | Often does not seem to notice details; makes careless mistakes |
| | Frequently does not follow through on instructions or finish tasks |
| | Is disorganized |
| | Frequently loses a lot of important things |
| | Often forgets things |
| | Frequently avoids doing things that require ongoing mental efforts |
| Hyperactivity | Is in constant motion, as if “driven by a motor” |
| | Has trouble staying seated |
| | Frequently squirms and fidgets |
| | Talks a lot |
| | Often runs, jumps, and climbs when this is not permitted |
| | Has trouble playing quietly |
| Impulsivity | Frequently acts and speaks without thinking |
| | May run into the street without looking for traffic first |
| | Frequently has trouble taking turns |
| | Cannot wait for things |
| | Often calls out an answer before the question is complete |
| | Frequently interrupts others |

Are there different types of ADHD?

Children with ADHD may have one or more of the symptoms listed in Table 1. The symptoms are usually classified as the following types of ADHD:

- Inattentive only (formerly known as attention-deficit disorder [ADD])—Children with this form of ADHD are not overly active. Because they do not disrupt the classroom or other activities, their symptoms may not be noticed. Among girls with ADHD, this form is more common.
- Hyperactive-impulsive—Children with this type of ADHD have increased activity and impulsivity with typical attention spans. This is the least common type and often occurs in younger children.
- Combined inattentive-hyperactive-impulsive—Children with this type of ADHD have all 3 symptoms. It is the type most people think of when they think of ADHD.

How can I tell if my child has ADHD?

Remember, it is common for all children to show some of these symptoms from time to time. Your child may be reacting to stress at school or at home. He may be bored or going through a difficult stage of life. It does not mean he has ADHD.

Sometimes a teacher is the first to notice inattention, hyperactivity, and/or impulsivity and will inform the parents.

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

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Adapted from the American Academy of Pediatrics patient education booklet, *Understanding ADHD: Information for Parents About Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder*. The information contained in this publication should not be used as a substitute for the medical care and advice of your pediatrician. There may be variations in treatment that your pediatrician may recommend based on individual facts and circumstances.

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