

Learn to Manage ADHD

It's a challenge to the whole family when a family member has ADHD (attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder). When someone is struggling with behavior problems caused by ADHD, other family members often face stress and frustration.

Relationships between spouses can become strained. Siblings may feel left out if the family seems to focus more on helping the child who has ADHD. Everyone can feel overwhelmed at times.

When someone in your family has ADHD, it's important to learn as much as you can about it and get the help you need.

ADHD often means a combination of problems. These can include trouble paying attention, trouble being still, and impulse problems such as acting quickly without thinking first. Although most people with the disorder want to control their behavior, they struggle to do so.

ADHD is a long-term condition that impacts millions of U.S. children. Often it continues into adulthood. Sometimes it is not identified until the person is already an adult. Regardless, more understanding of and help for ADHD is available today than ever before.

In this issue of *Your Source*, you'll learn about:

- Strategies to help your family cope with a family member's ADHD.
- How treatment—including early diagnosis, therapies and medications—can make a big difference.
- Steps that adults with ADHD can take each day to better manage their condition.

Go online today! Log on to access *ADHD and Families* under the Library/In the Spotlight section. There you'll find more information and helpful resources you can share with family members.



Employee Assistance Program

1-800-478-2812

For TTY Users: 1-800-456-4006



Log on here!

Parents' Coping Strategies

The following tips can help you and your family better manage ADHD.

- Praise your child for every success, no matter how small. Remember to do so for other siblings, too.
- Help your child stay on a regular daily schedule for meals, naps and bedtime.
- Try to make sure your child gets plenty of rest.
- Even if a child seems out of control, try to stay patient and calm. This can help the child calm down.
- Look ahead and plan for difficult situations. Give clear, basic instructions when it's time to move from one thing to the next.
- To defuse or redirect a child's behavior, use brief timeouts from the current activity.
- Help him or her to become more organized with schoolwork at home. Maintain a neat workspace that is free of distractions.
- Work as closely as possible with your child's teachers. Know what classroom strategies they're using to help the child.
- Take breaks to cut down on stress, and don't hesitate to ask for help sometimes.
- Set aside time for your relationship with your parental partner.

Getting Help for ADHD

People with ADHD have trouble with self-control and with focusing on tasks. At times they are overly active and lack patience. These problems are seen at home, at school or at work. If you suspect that someone in your family has ADHD, it's important to have them evaluated by a trained professional. This could be a psychiatrist, psychologist or developmental pediatrician. Spotting ADHD early and setting up a plan can help children do better at home and at school.



In dealing with a child's ADHD, a team approach often works best—with teachers, parents, and therapists working together.

Medications and Treatment

Research shows that treatment with drugs such as stimulants or antidepressants will help most patients with ADHD. Use of medications requires an in-depth diagnosis and ongoing medical monitoring. People with ADHD also benefit from behavior therapy and coaching provided by a mental health professional. Parenting skills training and family therapy can help everyone adapt to living with a person who has ADHD. Evidence shows that people don't outgrow ADHD. But they can learn how to cope with it.

ADHD and School

As the number of children diagnosed with ADHD increases, teachers have learned how to better support the educational needs of such children. You and your child's teacher should discuss the child's needs as soon as possible. Then check in often to monitor progress. Public schools are required by law to provide special help for children with learning disabilities like ADHD.

Now That's An Idea!

Tips for Adults With ADHD

Take your medication exactly as directed. Tell your doctor if you don't think it is helping.

Use reminders. Use daily planners and reminders/timers with alarms, and leave notes to yourself, to help stay on task.

Follow a routine. It helps to do things like waking up, eating, and going to sleep at the same time each day.

Get organized. Use labeled containers or bins to store similar items that you use.

Don't put things off if you can do them right now. This prevents clutter and confusion.

Stop before you start. Take a moment to stop and evaluate situations before you make decisions.

Exercise. Even a little exercise can help improve your mood, attention and energy.

Follow healthy habits. Eat a healthy diet low in sugar and salt. Avoid alcohol, drugs, and too much caffeine.