

What is Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder?

Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is a group of behavioural symptoms that include inattentiveness, hyperactivity and impulsiveness.

Common symptoms of ADHD include:

- a short attention span or being easily distracted
- restlessness, constant fidgeting or overactivity
- being impulsive

ADHD can occur in people of any intellectual ability, although it is more common in people with learning difficulties. People with ADHD may also have additional problems, such as sleep and anxiety disorders. Symptoms of ADHD tend to be first noticed at an early age, and may become more noticeable when a child's circumstances change, such as when they start school. Most cases are diagnosed in children between the ages of 6 and 12. However, many children go through phases where they are restless or inattentive. This is often completely normal and does not necessarily mean they have ADHD.

However, you should consider raising your concerns with your child's teacher, their school's special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) or GP if you think their behaviour may be different to most children their age.

How common is ADHD?

ADHD is the most common behavioural disorder in the UK. It's unknown exactly how many people have the condition, but most estimates suggest it affects around 2-5% of school-aged children and young people. Childhood ADHD is more commonly diagnosed in boys than girls. Girls with ADHD often have a form of the condition where the main symptoms relate to problems with attention rather than hyperactivity, which can cause less noticeable symptoms. It is therefore possible that ADHD could be underdiagnosed in girls, and could be more common than previously thought.

How is ADHD is treated?

There is no cure for ADHD, but it can be managed with appropriate educational support, advice and support for parents and affected children, alongside medication, if necessary.

Information adapted from: <http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/Attention-deficit-hyperactivity-disorder/Pages/Introduction.aspx>