



the portage path behavioral health reference guide to:

# Adult Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

**A**ttention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is a family of related neurological disorders that interfere with an individual's capacity to regulate activity level (hyperactivity), inhibit behavior (impulsivity), and attend to tasks (inattention) in developmentally appropriate ways. According to the American Psychiatric Association, it is estimated that there are approximately 1.6 to 2 million people who have this disorder. ADHD is commonly known as a children's disorder, but new research has shown that symptoms of ADHD often persist into adulthood. In fact, The Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder Organization reports that approximately 50 percent of children with ADHD will have residual ADHD symptoms in adulthood, and about 11 percent will have symptoms that cause impairment.

## Signs & Symptoms

- Feeling restless
- Talking excessively
- Interrupting or intruding on others
- Failing to give close attention to details or making careless mistakes at work
- Fidgeting with hands or feet or squirming in seat
- Difficulty sustaining attention in tasks or fun activities
- Difficulty listening when spoken to directly
- Difficulty following through on directions and failing to finish work
- Difficulty engaging in leisure activities quietly
- Difficulty organizing tasks and activities
- Feeling "on the go" or "driven by a motor"
- Leaving seat in situations where seating is expected

Adults with ADHD are known to have a high degree of distractibility, restlessness, disorganization, procrastination, mood lability, and substance abuse problems. The National Alliance for the Mentally Ill believe that Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder is an illness that is characterized by hyperactivity, impulsivity, and inattention.

The National Institute of Mental Health provides the following descriptions:

**Hyperactivity:** Hyperactive people always seem to be in motion. They cannot sit still and are known to talk excessively. Sitting still through a lesson or a task is thought to be impossible. They may roam around the room, squirm in their seats, wiggle their feet, touch everything, or noisily tap a pencil. They may also feel intensely restless.

**Impulsivity:** People who are impulsive seem unable to curb their immediate reactions or think before they act. As a result, they may blurt out answers to questions or inappropriate comments. Their impulsivity may make them extremely impatient.

**Inattention:** People who are inattentive have a hard time keeping their mind on one thing and may get bored with a task after only a few minutes. Focusing conscious, deliberate attention on organizing and completing routine tasks may be difficult.



## Treatments for Adult ADHD

Before beginning treatment for ADHD, get a comprehensive clinical interview, which includes discussing past and present symptoms, developmental and medical history, work history, psychiatric history, and day-to-day functioning. An official diagnosis is often made by a team of clinicians, which can include a psychiatrist, behavioral neurologist, clinical psychologist or an educational psychologist. A team of experts offers patients a more official diagnosis of ADHD and any underlying disorders that often co-exist, such as depression, anxiety disorders, conduct disorders, drug abuse, or antisocial behavior.

After ADHD has been officially diagnosed by a medical professional, effective treatment procedures may begin. Unfortunately no cure exists and the cause of the disease is still a mystery. Stimulant medication, like Ritalin, Dexedrine, Adderall, Desoxyn, and Cylert are all used to treat this disorder. The Harvard Mahoney Neuroscience Institute reports that Adult ADHD shows the same therapeutic response to ADHD medications as does the childhood form. However, a combination of stimulant medication, special education, and interactive counseling is the most effective form of treatment currently available for persons with ADHD.



## Tips for Adults and Teens with ADHD

The National Institute of Mental Health provides the following coping strategies for adults and teens with ADHD:

**When necessary, ask the teacher or boss to repeat instructions, rather than guess.**

**Work in a quiet area. Do one thing at a time. Give yourself short breaks.**

**Break large assignments or job tasks into small, simple tasks. Set a deadline for each task and reward yourself as you complete each one.**

**Each day, make a list of what you need to do. Plan the best order for doing each task. Then make a schedule for doing them. Use a calendar or daily planner to keep yourself on track.**

**Write things you need to remember in a notebook with dividers. Write different kinds of information - like assignments, appointments, and phone numbers - in different sections. Keep the book with you all of the time.**

**Post notes to yourself to help remind yourself of things you need to do. Tape notes on the bathroom mirror, on the refrigerator, in your school locker, or dashboard of your car - wherever you're likely to need the reminder.**

- **Create a routine. Get yourself ready for school or work at the same time, in the same way, every day.**

If you have identified with the issues discussed in this flyer and you're ready to take the next step toward feeling better, visit our web site or call Portage Path and find out how we can help:

<b>Web Site</b>	<a href="http://www.portagepath.org">www.portagepath.org</a>
<b>Appointments</b>	330-253-3100 800-828-4508

If you feel you're in emotional crisis and you need someone to talk to, call our free 24-hour, 7-day crisis hotline:

<b>Support Hotline</b>	330-434-9144 888-434-8878
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