

Parent Newsletter



DID YOU KNOW?

ADHD IS COMMON

Both children and adults can have attention disorders. Prevalence is estimated to be between 5% and 9% for children and 5% for adults.

IT AFFECTS ALL AGES

Contrary to popular belief, attention disorders do not have to first present in early childhood. They may appear in adolescence or even adulthood.

ADHD IS GENETIC

Attention disorders are biological, most often caused by genes that influence the development and functioning of specific neurotransmitters in the brain.

IT CHANGES OVER TIME

The signs and severity of attention disorders change over time. Children may become less behaviorally impulsive as they mature, but their cognitive, emotional and social functioning may still be affected.

Evaluating and treating attention disorders requires a specific approach

The evaluation and care of ADHD

► Obtain a specialized evaluation

Attention disorders very often overlap with learning difficulties, anxiety, depression and other types of disorders. A careful and comprehensive evaluation is the best way to fully understand the needs of the individual so the best help can be offered. A consultation with a physician who may only review teacher and parent ADHD rating scales is not sufficient. In fact, this approach leads to poor treatment compliance.

► Become educated about ADHD

Attention disorders are complex and can impact school, social and family life. Obtaining a full understanding of attention disorders from appropriate professionals has been found to be the second most effective treatment intervention (medication is the first). A thorough understanding permits the establishment of appropriate expectations for effective management.

► Consider proven treatment options

A confusing array of treatment options must be carefully sorted through to develop a sound management plan. Many interventions have not shown any documented benefit. Some may be harmful and others await more research. To date, medication, behavioral strategies, coaching and particular types of learning support are the only interventions with convincing research support. Neurofeedback is currently being carefully investigated.

► Monitor and reevaluate regularly

The brain continues to develop into the late 20's or early 30's. Over time, medication dosages may stop being effective and new management strategies may be needed.

► Maintain a long term perspective

Attention disorders can have their greatest impact during childhood and adolescence. In most cases, almost two thirds, attention disorders will not be "outgrown." Each year different academic, work, social and self-management requirements must be met.

► Be optimistic

With ongoing and appropriate care, attention disorders can be very successfully managed.

The Center for Attention Disorders offers comprehensive evaluation, treatment, learning support and consultation services for children, adolescents and adults with not only attention disorders, but learning or social-emotional difficulties as well. Our annual newsletters for parents, clinicians and educators share the past year's important research finding and new treatment options. Please visit our website to download additional information about attention disorders, or contact us by phone or email.