

# Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder: diagnosis and management

Information for the public  
Published: 14 March 2018

[www.nice.org.uk](http://www.nice.org.uk)

## **ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder): the care you should expect**

ADHD is a condition that affects people's behaviour. It can make them seem restless or hyperactive, have trouble remembering things and focusing on tasks, and they may often act on impulse without stopping to think. It is usually spotted in childhood but some people are not diagnosed until they are adults. It can affect people throughout their lives, disrupting relationships and making everyday life difficult. Symptoms of ADHD can be mistaken for other conditions or overlooked altogether – for example, it is sometimes missed in girls and women.

We want this guideline to make a difference to children, young people and adults with ADHD by making sure:

- everyone is correctly diagnosed – the guideline aims to improve recognition of ADHD by highlighting which groups of people are most likely to have it
- with the right information and support, people understand their diagnosis and see it as a positive step towards getting help and understanding from others
- healthcare professionals listen to people's views about different treatment options and help them get the most from their treatment
- people have check-ups as often as they need them, whether or not they take medicines for their ADHD, and are offered support to complete their treatment
- information is shared with teachers and other healthcare professionals so that people have seamless support – especially during big changes like moving from school to college.

## Making decisions together

Decisions about care and treatment are best when they are made together. Your health professionals should talk with you about all your options and listen carefully to your views and concerns.

They should also:

- give you clear information that suits your age, understanding and needs
- tell you about other ways to get help, including self-help and support groups
- support families and tell them how to get their own help and advice.

If you can't understand the information you are given, tell your health professional.

Read more about [making decisions about your care](#).

## Where can I find out more?

[NHS Choices](#) has more information about ADHD.

Find your nearest local [Healthwatch](#).

The organisations below can give you more advice and support.

- [ADDers.org](https://www.adders.org)
- [ADDISS](https://www.addiss.org.uk) (The National Attention Deficit Disorder Information and Support Service), 0208 952 2800
- [ADHD Foundation](https://www.adhd.org.uk)
- [ADHD UK](https://www.adhd-uk.org)
- [Adults with Attention Deficit Disorder UK](https://www.aadd-uk.org) (AADD-UK)
- [YoungMinds](https://www.youngminds.org.uk), 0808 802 5544 (helpline for parents)

NICE is not responsible for the content of these websites.

We wrote this guideline with people who have been affected by ADHD and staff who treat and support them. All the decisions are based on the best research available.

ISBN: 978-1-4731-2831-6