

Tipsheet:

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is a diagnosed condition that affects brain functioning in both children and adults.

People with ADHD may experience impulsivity-hyperactivity symptoms that are severe, persistent and present across a number of different settings (e.g. at home and at school)¹. The exact causes of ADHD are unknown.

Bupa has teamed up with Kids Helpline to give you some tips on supporting a child with ADHD.





Signs/symptoms of ADHD

To be diagnosed with ADHD, a child must experience 6 or more symptoms of inattention and impulsivity/hyperactivity for at least 6 months and these must interfere with their everyday life¹.

People with ADHD might experience difficulties with:

- paying attention
- staying focused on tasks
- following instructions
- regulating emotional responses
- thinking critically or problem solving
- turn taking
- relaxing/quiet time/sitting still
- controlling their behaviour²

This can impact on children in a variety of ways, including difficulties with learning and socialising. With good care, support and treatment, children with ADHD can expect to live a life relatively similar to their peers³.


Treatment Options

There are several treatments available, including talking therapies like counselling, behaviour therapy, family therapy, parenting skills training, and education support.

With the help of your doctor, there are also options for medication, dietary and lifestyle changes. It can often be a case of trying a combination of these to see what works for you, your child and your family².

How to support your child and family

There are many things families can do to support a child with ADHD. Some examples include:

- Having structure/routines where possible
 - Maintaining a good relationship with your child
 - In your conversations with your child, separate behaviour from identity – e.g. Not listening / paying attention is a behaviour, not who a child is. Saying “you’re a bad listener” is disempowering and a child may internalise this quality. Simply reframing to “you are acting in a way that tells me you aren’t listening to me” gives the child an opportunity to change behaviour
 - Positively reinforce behaviours you would like to encourage in your child – e.g. turn taking, or waiting patiently
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- Have a holistic plan to support your child that includes family members, friends, your child’s school and professional supports to ensure consistency
 - As a parent, ensure you have access to a support network to help you self-care, improve your skills and advocate for your child
 - Checkout WayAhead for some more great recommendations for parents!²

For more information or support

There are many government and not-for-profit organisations that have resources and support services/groups available to parents.

If you need some support, call the **Parentline** service in your state or territory to discuss your options with a counsellor. You can also visit kidshelpline.com.au/parents

If your child needs support they can call Kids Helpline on **1800 55 1800** or visit kidshelpline.com.au

Please refer to the following list of recommendations and the references list for links to helpful websites and articles.

ADHD Australia

ADHD Australia is an independent, national body to support all people impacted by ADHD to achieve optimal positive outcomes for the community at large.

adhdaustralia.org.au

Children, Youth and Women's Health Service

Provides information for parents and carers on a large variety of child health and development topics.

cyh.com

Raising Children Network

Provides independent information funded by the Australian Government. They provide information about ADHD, as well as links to other resources and support groups.

raisingchildren.net.au

References

American Psychiatric Association: Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 5th edition. Arlington, VA., American Psychiatric Association, 2013.

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Available from: www.rch.org.au/kidsinfo/fact_sheets

Health Direct. ADHD in Children [Online] 2018 [Accessed Feb 2019]
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Kids Matter. ADHD: Other resources [Online] 2009 [Accessed Feb 2019] Available from: www.kidsmatter.edu.au