ADHD
FACT SHEET

What is ADHD?

Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is one of the most common neurobehavioral disorders of childhood. It is sometimes referred to as Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD). It is usually first diagnosed in childhood and often lasts into adulthood. Children with ADHD have trouble paying attention, controlling impulsive behaviors (may act without thinking about what the result will be), and, in some cases, are overly active.

What are some of the signs of ADHD?

It is normal for children, at one time or another, to have trouble focusing and behaving. However, in children with ADHD, the symptoms continue instead of getting better, and they can make learning very difficult.

A child with ADHD might:

- have a hard time paying attention and daydream a lot
- not seem to listen
- be easily distracted from schoolwork or play
- forget things
- be in constant motion or unable to stay seated
- squirm or fidget
- talk too much
- not be able to play quietly
- act and speak without thinking
- have trouble taking turns
- interrupt others

Deciding if a child has ADHD is a several step process. There is no single test to diagnose ADHD, and many other problems, like anxiety, depression, and certain types of learning disabilities, can have similar symptoms. One step of the process involves having a medical exam, including hearing and vision tests, to rule out other problems with symptoms like ADHD. Another part of the process may include a checklist for rating ADHD symptoms and taking a history of the child from parents, teachers, and sometimes, the child.

What can I do if I think my child may have ADHD?

You are doing the right thing now – talking with your child's doctor or nurse. If you or your doctor have concerns about ADHD, you can take your child to a specialist such as a child psychologist or developmental pediatrician, or you can contact your local early intervention agency (for children under 3) or public school (for children 3 and older). To find out who to speak to in your area, you can contact the National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities by logging on to **www.nichcy.org/states.htm**.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) sponsors the National Resource Center, a program of CHADD – Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder. Their Web site has links to information for people with ADHD and their families (**www.help4adhd.org**). The National Resources Center operates a call center with trained staff to answer questions about ADHD. The number is **1-800-233-4050**.

In order to make sure your child reaches his or her full potential, it is very important to get help for ADHD as early as possible.

1-800-CDC-INFO www.cdc.gov/actearly

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Learn the Signs. Act Early.