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# Division of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

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# **Understanding and Coping with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)**

**TCHATT**

**(Texas Child Health Through Telemedicine)**



# What is ADHD?

- ADHD is one of the most common neuro-developmental disorders of childhood. It is usually first diagnosed in childhood and often lasts into adulthood. Children with ADHD may have trouble paying attention, controlling impulsive behaviors or may act without thinking about what the result will be, and/or be overly active.



# Parenting Tips for ADHD

- Raising a child with ADHD is not like traditional childrearing. Normal rule-making and household routines can become almost impossible, depending on the type and severity of your child's symptoms, so you will need to adopt different approaches. It can become frustrating to cope with some of the behaviors which result from your child's ADHD, but there are ways to make life easier.
- Parents must accept the fact that children with ADHD have functionally different brains from those of other children. While children with ADHD can still learn what is acceptable and what is not, their disorder does make them more prone to impulsive behavior.



# Parenting Tips for ADHD

- Fostering the development of a child with ADHD means that you will have to modify your behavior and learn to manage the behavior of your child. Medication may be the first step in your child's treatment. Behavioral techniques for managing a child's ADHD symptoms must always be in place. By following these guidelines, you can limit destructive behavior and help your child overcome self-doubt.



# Symptoms of ADHD

- It is normal for children to have trouble focusing and behaving at one time or another. However, children with ADHD do not just grow out of these behaviors. The symptoms continue, can be severe, and can cause difficulty at school, at home, or with friends.
- A child with ADHD might: daydream a lot, forget or lose things a lot, fidget, talk too much, make careless mistakes or take unnecessary risks, have a hard time resisting temptation, have trouble taking turns, have difficulty getting along with others.



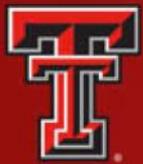
# Causes of ADHD

- Genetics is the main cause of ADHD. However, in addition to genetics, scientists are studying other possible causes and risk factors including: brain injury, exposure to environmental factors during pregnancy or at a young age, alcohol and tobacco use during pregnancy, premature delivery, low birth weight.



# Diagnosis

- Diagnosing a child with ADHD is a process with several steps. 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 examination, including hearing and vision tests, to rule out other problems with symptoms like ADHD. Diagnosing ADHD usually includes a checklist for rating ADHD symptoms and taking a history of the child from parents, teachers, and sometimes, the child.



# Treatment of ADHD

- In most cases, ADHD is best treated with a combination of behavior therapy and medication. For preschool-aged children (4-5 years of age) with ADHD, behavior therapy, particularly training for parents, is recommended as the first line of treatment before medication is tried. What works best can depend on the child and family. Good treatment plans will include close monitoring, follow-ups, and making changes, if needed, along the way.



# Treatment of ADHD

- Common medications prescribed for ADHD are stimulants such as Adderall (amphetamine), Ritalin (methylphenidate), Concerta (methylphenidate), Focalin (dexmethylphenidate), Metadate or Methylin (methylphenidate), Vyvanse (lisdexamfetamine dimesylate), etc. And non-stimulants such as Strattera (atomoxetine) and Intuniv (guanfacine).
- Common types of therapies recommended for ADHD are family therapy, social skills group therapy, and individual therapy such as Behavior therapy and Cognitive-behavioral therapy.



# Managing Symptoms of ADHD

- Being healthy is important for all children and can be especially important for children with ADHD. In addition to behavioral therapy and medication, having a healthy lifestyle can make it easier for your child to deal with ADHD symptoms.
- Here are some healthy behaviors that may help: Developing healthy eating habits such as eating plenty of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains and choosing lean protein sources, participating in daily physical activity based on age, limiting the amount of daily screen time from TVs, computers, phones, and other electronics, and getting the recommended amount of sleep each night based on age.



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# Questions