

What is it?

Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is a common developmental disorder that affects how people behave. Children with ADHD may not be able to sit still. They may fidget, cut others off and act on impulse. They may find it hard to focus, finish tasks and follow orders. Teens may also have mood swings, low self-esteem and take risks. Their school work may suffer. Someone with ADHD can show some or all of these symptoms. The causes are still not known.

ADHD is often diagnosed when a child is school-aged. Adults can still be told they have it later in life.

If your child has ADHD, your GP will make a treatment plan. Treatment helps support your child and manage symptoms. Treatment options include behavioural therapies, parent training and medication (for older children).

What will my GP do now?

Your GP will refer your child to a paediatrician or developmental psychologist for a diagnosis.

If your child isn't at school yet, your GP may suggest you watch and wait until they reach early school years. Medication is not used in young children.

If your child is at school, your GP may refer you to a specialist for assessment and treatment. If your child has speech or language problems or delays, your GP may refer you for a developmental assessment.

Your GP may suggest counselling or support groups if appropriate.

If your child's symptoms are severe, your GP may also suggest supports for reading, writing, maths and social skills.

Your GP may assess your child's health and treat any issues. They may review your child's iron levels and diet, check for sleep issues and help you improve your child's sleep hygiene.

What will my GP do in the future?

Your GP may check in with you and your child often to see how they are going. If your child has new speech and language problems, your GP may refer your child for a developmental assessment.

Your GP will keep checking in on your child's health and progress in the long term. They will refer your child to a specialist if your child's symptoms are not getting better.

What can I do?

Learn about ADHD and get involved in your child's care. Follow the advice your GP gives you. Ask questions if you are unsure about something. Work with your child's school. Meet with your child's teachers to ask how your child is. Be an active, loving parent. Don't blame your child. It is not their fault, and they can't always control how they behave.

Join support groups and connect with other parents who are going through the same as you. Ask your GP for local supports. Focus on healthy living. Make sure your child is eating a healthy diet, sleeping for eight hours a night and moving each day.

What questions could I ask my doctor?

- Who can I speak to for help?*
- Which specialists should my child see?*
- What are the treatment options?*
- How can I best support my child's health?*
- What should I tell my child?*



What supports are available?

Primary and Community Health - Child Psychology Services

Provide supports for children and their carers across a range of clinics. Ask your GP to refer you.

SWSLHD Youth Health Services

Provides a primary health care service for at-risk young people across a many clinics. Patients can self-refer.

headspace

headspace offers a range of supports to young people aged 12 to 25 years. There are many local centres. Kids aged 12 to 15 years can phone headspace on **1800 650 890**.

Kids Helpline

A helpline for ages five to 25 years. Phone **1800 551 800**.

Mental Health Line

24 hour phone access service, seven days a week, across the state. Phone **1800 011 511**.

Private specialists

Private specialists are also an option. Your GP can refer you.

Where can I learn more?

- **Royal Children's Hospital Melbourne** – Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD): rch.org.au
- **ADHD Australia:** adhdaustralia.org.au
- **National Institute of Mental Health** – Attention-deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder: nimh.nih.gov