

## Where to Get Help

If your child has not yet seen a doctor and you suspect that he is showing signs of ADHD, you may raise your concerns with your child's school counsellors. School counsellors are connected to our community mental health service, **REACH** (Response, Early intervention, Assessment in Community mental Health), which can provide further advice and assistance.

If your child is seeking help at our clinic, please raise your concerns with your child's doctor, nurse, or allied health professional.



### Department of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry

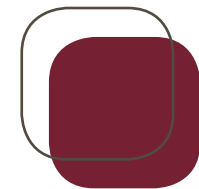
Institute of Mental Health  
Buangkok Green Medical Park  
10 Buangkok View  
Singapore 539747  
General Enquiries: 6389 2000  
Appointment Line: 6389 2200  
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[www.imh.com.sg](http://www.imh.com.sg)

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# ATTENTION DEFICIT HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER



# WHAT IS ATTENTION DEFICIT HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER (ADHD)?

*Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is a condition connected with brain development and describes a group of behavioural difficulties marked by inattention, hyperactivity and impulsivity. These difficulties can be observed in early childhood and are consistent across different situations, e.g. at home, in school and in social settings.*

*There are two main groups of symptoms: inattentive; and hyperactive-impulsive. A child or adolescent with ADHD may show symptoms from predominantly one group or the other or combine symptoms from both groups.*



Symptoms of inattentive-type ADHD include:

- not listening to what is being said
- making careless mistakes in schoolwork or activities
- frequently shifting from one activity to another
- forgetfulness, losing items frequently
- being messy and disorganised

Symptoms of hyperactive-impulsive-type ADHD include:

- fidgeting or squirming
- talking excessively
- having difficulty remaining seated
- frequently interrupting conversations or activities of others
- blurting out answers before questions have been completed
- having difficulty waiting for their turn in games or activities

## What causes Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder?

Many factors are thought to contribute to ADHD, including genetic and environmental factors. A family history of ADHD increases the likelihood of your child having symptoms of ADHD. Environmental factors are less well understood, but experts agree that ADHD is not caused by poor parenting.



## MANAGEMENT OF ATTENTION DEFICIT HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER

Treatment of children or adolescents with ADHD involves a combination of different approaches:

**BEHAVIOURAL METHODS.** Behavioural methods often involve the use of a rewards system or behaviour contract that focusses on a few (maximum of 3) problem behaviours at a time. Other behavioural methods include skills-based training for the family or individual (e.g. social skills training, anger management training) to help the child and family cope better in various situations.

**SUPPORT AND EDUCATION OF PARENTS.** Parents should keep themselves as informed as possible about the disorder and work closely with the school and professional staff in supporting the child. It is important for parents to cope with their own emotions and not be reactive or negative towards the child. Modelling and providing specific instructions about appropriate behaviour are more effective than giving the child a long list of 'do-not's. Support groups and parent training are helpful for providing parents with techniques for behaviour management.

**APPROPRIATE SCHOOL-BASED INTERVENTIONS.** School-based interventions by teachers may include:

- seating the child or adolescent at the front of the classroom
- rewarding or praising the child or adolescent for work done or effort made
- teaching organisational skills to help children or adolescents with inattention track their progress and pick up time-management and note-taking skills.

**USE OF MEDICATION.** Medication may be prescribed to help reduce symptoms of ADHD. Talk to your child's doctor if you have any queries or concerns about medication.

You can also help your child by being patient, understanding and supportive. Be encouraging and empathise with his or her challenges. Celebrate all small successes and be positive.