

# ADHD

## HOW IS IT TREATED?

Treatment options need to be tailored to the individual and may include medication for the child and counseling for the child and/or family. The school should be involved along with a responsive teacher. A robust treatment approach includes parent education, behavioral intervention strategies, an appropriate educational program and medication when necessary. Parents play a key role in supporting the child through school years that can be challenging.

- Dr. Mate's says, "Many children with poor attention skills can function quite well in the presence of a caring adult. Emotionally nurturing interactions produce positive changes in the child's brain chemistry. Dopamine, the brain chemical deficient in ADD—important for attention and motivation—can be supplied not only by a Ritalin pill, but also by a nurturing interaction with an attentive adult."

## ARE THERE BENEFITS TO HAVING ADHD?

Creativity, intuition, leadership skills, athleticism, and the performing arts are just some of the areas where people with ADHD brains can thrive. ADHD is not a reflection of intelligence or potential.

People with ADHD are 300% more likely to start their own business. Some accomplished business people with ADHD include: Richard Branson, founder of Virgin Airlines; Ingvar Kamprad, Swedish founder of IKEA stores; Paul Orfalea,

the founder and chairperson of Kinko's; and Charles Schwab, the founder, chairperson, and CEO of the Charles Schwab Corporation, the largest brokerage firm in the U.S.

## WANT MORE INFORMATION? CHECK OUT THE WEB SITES LISTED BELOW...

Ask your health care provider for more information and visit these informative ADHD websites:

- [www.chadd.org](http://www.chadd.org)
- [www.addresources.org](http://www.addresources.org)
- [www.additudemag.com](http://www.additudemag.com)

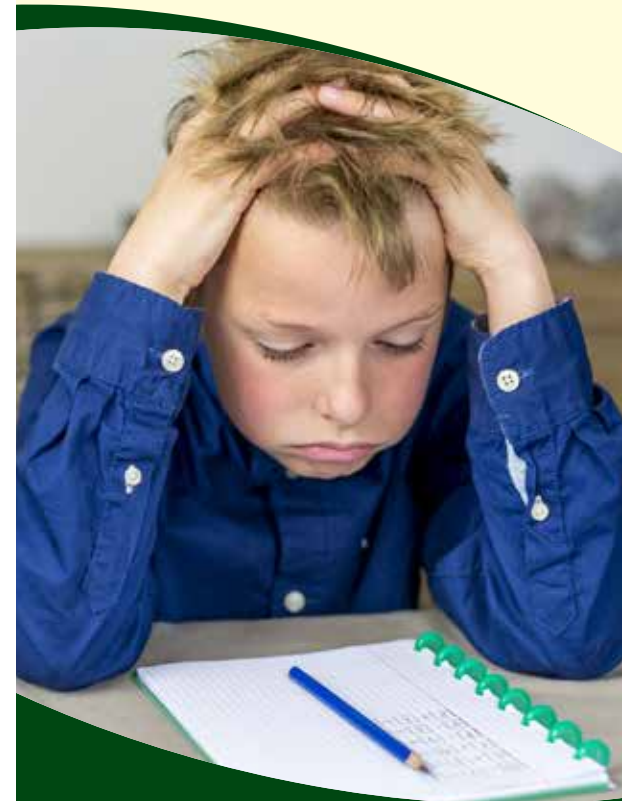
*This report was compiled by Ammonoosuc Community Health Services, Inc. (ACHS) clinical staff for informational purposes, and does not replace any advice one might receive from a qualified health care provider.*

*Founded in 1975, Ammonoosuc Community Health Services is a nonprofit community health center offering a network of quality, affordable primary health services. Our programs promote and support the well-being of individuals and families by emphasizing preventive care and encouraging active participation in one's own health. ACHS serves 26 towns in northern Grafton and southern Coos counties and has sites located in Littleton, Franconia, Whitefield, Warren and Woodsville. We provide comprehensive services, regardless of one's ability to pay, to over 10,000 patients.*



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# ADHD



## Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

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*Learn more about what it is  
and how it is treated.*



**Ammonoosuc  
Community Health Services, Inc.**

# Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

*ADHD is one of the most common neurodevelopmental disorders of childhood. It is usually first diagnosed in childhood and often lasts into adulthood.*

## WHAT IS ADHD?

Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder is believed to be a neurobiological disorder impacting areas of executive brain functioning that often becomes noticeable in early childhood and can continue into adulthood. The problems associated with ADHD fall under three headings:

### Inattention

- Easily distracted, forgetful and bored
- Difficulty following directions, excessive daydreaming, poor organization
- Problems focusing on one thing, finishing tasks, losing things

### Hyperactivity

- Nonstop motion
- Trouble sitting for meals, classroom work or quiet play
- Touching everything, talking constantly

### Impulsivity

- Difficulty taking turns, waiting, delaying gratification
- Interrupting people, blurting out whatever they're thinking
- Problems regulating emotions, taking risks

It's normal for children to be inattentive, very active, and impulsive at times, but in children with ADHD these behaviors occur more often

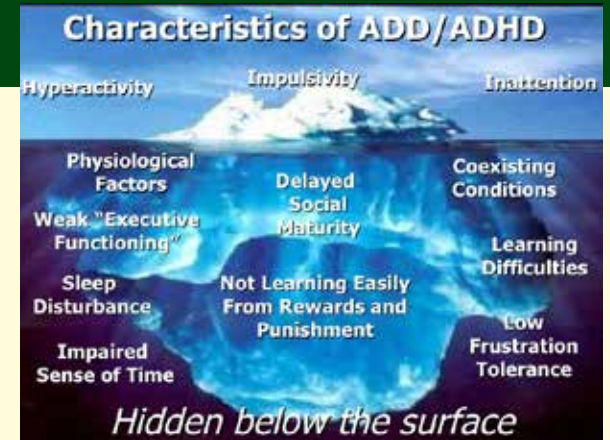
and to a greater degree. ADHD can be primarily inattentive, primarily hyperactive-impulsive, or combined type. Symptoms may be mild, moderate or severe.

- ADHD researcher and author Daniel G. Amen, MD, identifies 7 types of ADD; for more information (as well as interesting SPECT brain imaging photos) go to [www.amenclinics.com](http://www.amenclinics.com).

## WHAT IS THE CAUSE?

Studies suggest that the disorder may develop due to genetic and/or environmental influences. There is evidence that cigarette smoking and alcohol use during pregnancy may contribute to the development of the disorder, as well as significant childhood exposure to lead. The precise cause is undetermined.

- Canadian author and childhood development expert Gabor Mate, MD, believes that "ADD is not an inherited condition, contrary to the commonly held opinion, but originates in early childhood stresses during the first years of crucial brain and personality development." Visit his website at [www.drgabormate.com](http://www.drgabormate.com), or listen to him on YouTube.com.



The "ADHD iceberg" is a great visual that illustrates the complexity of issues hidden beneath the more obvious "tip" of inattention and hyperactivity.

## HOW IS IT DIAGNOSED?

Parents and teachers are usually the first to notice that a child is struggling behaviorally, academically or socially. Since there isn't a standardized ADHD test, diagnosis is usually a cooperative effort involving the child's caretakers, health care providers and teachers. The child's doctor can rule out any medical conditions that might present as ADHD symptoms and make a referral to a behavioral health specialist. Two-thirds of children diagnosed with ADHD have at least one other co-occurring condition, such as anxiety disorders, disruptive behavior disorders, mood disorders, and learning disabilities. Girls with ADHD often present differently than boys. They may be withdrawn, academic underachievers with low self esteem. The average age of diagnosis is 7.

- Read The Atlantic's online article by Rebecca Ruiz (July 7, 2014) titled: How Childhood Trauma Could Be Mistaken for ADHD at [www.theatlantic.com](http://www.theatlantic.com).