

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

Also known as hyperkinetic disorder (HKD) is a mental disorder or neurobehavioral disorder characterized by either significant difficulties of inattention or hyperactivity and impulsiveness or a combination of the two. Symptoms usually emerge before seven years of age.

Causes

- Blood relatives (such as a parent or sibling) with ADHD or another mental health disorder
- Exposure to environmental toxins — such as lead, found mainly in paint and pipes in older buildings
- Maternal drug use, alcohol use or smoking during pregnancy
- Maternal exposure to environmental poisons — such as polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) — during pregnancy
- Premature birth
- Lack of attention (inattentiveness)
- Hyperactivity
- Impulsive behavior (impulsivity)

Signs and Symptoms

Inattentive symptoms

1. Fails to give close attention to details or makes careless mistakes in schoolwork
2. Has difficulty keeping attention during tasks or play
3. Does not seem to listen when spoken to directly
4. Does not follow through on instructions and fails to finish schoolwork, chores, or duties in the workplace
5. Has difficulty organizing tasks and activities
6. Avoids or dislikes tasks that require sustained mental effort (such as schoolwork)
7. Often loses toys, assignments, pencils, books, or tools needed for tasks or activities
8. Is easily distracted
9. Is often forgetful in daily activities

Hyperactivity symptoms:

1. Fidgets with hands or feet or squirms in seat
2. Leaves seat when remaining seated is expected
3. Runs about or climbs in inappropriate situations
4. Has difficulty playing quietly
5. Is often "on the go," acts as if "driven by a motor," talks excessively

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

Impulsivity symptoms:

1. Blurts out answers before questions have been completed
2. Has difficulty awaiting turn
3. Interrupts or intrudes on others (butts into conversations or games)

Treatment

A combination of medication and behavioral treatment works best.

- Amphetamine-dextroamphetamine (Adderall)
- Dexmethylphenidate (Focalin)
- Dextroamphetamine (Dexedrine, Dextrostat)
- Lisdexamfetamine (Vyvanse)
- Methylphenidate (Ritalin, Concerta, Metadate, Daytrana)

Other tips to help your child with ADHD include:

- Communicate regularly with the child's teacher.
- Keep a consistent daily schedule, including regular times for homework, meals, and outdoor activities. Make changes to the schedule in advance and not at the last moment.
- Limit distractions in the child's environment.
- Make sure the child gets a healthy, varied diet, with plenty of fiber and basic nutrients.
- Make sure the child gets enough sleep.
- Praise and reward good behavior.
- Provide clear and consistent rules for the child.

Conversation

Instructor: Good morning Lisa, for today's lesson, we are going to continue with techniques in talking to a child with ADHD.

Lisa: That sounds challenging.

Instructor: Indeed and handling with Attention Deficit Disorder is something that many parents and children have to deal with on a daily basis. My family and I have dealt with my Attention Deficit Disorder for many years. Since I can speak from experience, I would like to give you tips on how to talk to someone with Attention Deficit Disorder.

Lisa: Okay sure. I'm listening.

Instructor: The first technique is eye contact. Granted, eye contact is important in any conversation, but it is even more important in a conversation with someone with ADD. If you are looking the person directly in the eyes, you can make sure that you have their undivided attention. This slightly intimidating move will make that person with Attention Deficit Disorder realize that they need to listen to you.

Lisa: Yes I agree with you on that. It's really important. But what if, the child is not paying attention still?

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

Instructor: If the person's eyes start wandering, say their name in a sentence to bring their attention back to you. Remember, this disorder causes someone to forget that they were supposed to be interested in something.

Lisa: I will mark that point with care.

Instructor: The next tip would be, not speaking much with your hands.

Lisa: Oh why is that? Is it destructive?

Instructor: Yes it is. Rigorous hand movements during a conversation will distract someone with Attention Deficit Disorder. That's why do not allow their mind to wander from your conversation by rapid hand movements.

Lisa: Okay, go ahead.

Instructor: The next would be about in commands. Make sure that your commands to them are simple, brief, and focus on one thing at a time. The more commands that you give someone with Attention Deficit Disorder, the worse their response will be.

Lisa: Oh I see. But can you give me an example on that sir? Or can you develop a scenario?

Instructor: If you are giving a command to someone in another room with Attention Deficit Disorder, make sure you tell them to first come into the room where you are. This way you can give them direct eye contact and will be assured that the command will be remembered.

Lisa: That's really making sense. I will surely note it down.

Instructor: Also, Sometimes it is not what we say, but the way we say it that matters most. As much as possible, modulate a friendly tone of voice. And always have positive reinforcement.

Lisa: Indeed.

Instructor: Well do you have question?

Lisa: None so far. Thank you!