

ADD/ADHD

Definition

Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is a “disruptive behavior disorder” characterized by inattention, hyperactivity or their combination. In those with ADD, the frontal cortex (surface) of the brain has more difficulty using glucose and less blood flow than in people without ADD. The frontal cortex inhibits impulses, initiates behavior, and controls working memory.

Diagnosing

A professional cognitive skills test can pinpoint the exact cause of learning problems. In people with ADD/ADHD, the weakest cognitive skills are attention (divided, sustained and/or selective), although other areas may suffer as well.

Treatments

- Ritalin and other stimulant medications can treat the symptoms of ADD/ADHD.
- Classroom accommodations, such as allowing the child to test alone in a private room, can sometimes help the student focus and prevent class disruptions.
- Cognitive skills training attacks the root causes of ADD/ADHD by strengthening weak cognitive skills. (In the case of ADD/ADHD, selective, divided, and sustained attention.)
- You might also be able to reduce the frequency or severity of problems by limiting the intake of foods containing non-organic dyes, which have been linked to hyperactivity.

Symptoms/Characteristics

Hyperactivity includes:

- Overactivity
- Fidgeting most of the time
- Squirming in their seat
- Purposeless or non-goal directed activity
- Goes from one activity to another without completing activities

Distractibility includes:

- Very distractible
- Does not complete tasks
- Lacks selective attention
- Unable to concentrate (unless fascinated by a subject)
- Tendency to daydream

Impulsivity includes:

- Demands must be met immediately
 - Needs immediate reward for achievement
 - Poor planners
 - Lack of organizational skills
 - Lack of self-control
 - Does things without thinking of consequences
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Helpful resources

Attention Deficit Information Network

<http://www.addinfonetwork.com>

Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder

<http://chadd.org>

