

ATTENTION DEFICIT HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER (ADHD)

Between 1% and 20% of American children are estimated to have attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). ADHD occurs in both children and adults and interferes with the affected person's ability to function normally in their day-to-day activities. We do not yet understand completely the causes behind these problems, but many effective treatments are readily available.

Symptoms of ADHD

ADHD has many symptoms, including:

- Restlessness
- Difficulty paying attention
- Impulsiveness
- Making noise
- Fidgeting
- Talking too much
- Often losing things
- Difficulty completing tasks
- Disorganized behavior

Although the cause of ADHD is not known, it can be thought of as the part of the brain that controls impulses and attention maturing a bit too slowly. Many children grow out of their ADHD as they learn to control their impulses and to pay attention.

A definitive diagnosis of ADHD can only be made after observation in a variety of settings over a fairly lengthy period of time. Because all children exhibit ADHD-like symptoms some of the time, it is important not to make this diagnosis yourself.

Treatment for ADHD

Successful treatment of ADHD starts with awareness of the problem and making modifications in the home and school environments. A child can be helped to focus his attention by providing him with shorter work periods, more frequent breaks, and a quiet place to work. Structure and routine often prove helpful.

Some patients develop problems with self-esteem, depression, or anxiety; individual or family therapy may help in these cases. Medications also may be helpful. Ritalin, a stimulant, is the most common. Other common drugs are dexadrine and pemoline (both stimulants) and imipramine and desipramine (antidepressants). These medications increase chemicals that are already present in the brain and help to decrease the problem behaviors. Minor side effects (headache, stomachache, change of appetites) usually go away as the child becomes used to the medication.

Your health care provider can help you to decide on the best treatment approach for your child's specific problem.

COLORADO

ADDAG

Parents of children with AD/HD and Adults with ADD.
For meeting times please contact us at 303 675-5337 or

ADDAGofCO@aol.com

ADDAG of Fort Collins, call Katrina 970 482-6618.

ADDAG of Highlands Ranch at Lone Tree Library.

ADDAG of Littleton/SE Denver at Castlewood Library.

ADDAG of Westminster at Westminster Library.

Colorado Springs

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(719) 683-3351

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Denver

Sabrina Marxuach Hurst, Adult Group

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ADDAG

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Fort Collins

Maxine Jarvi

(970) 223-1338

Lakewood (Denver area)

Kay Michaelson

Mile-Hi Chapter of CH.A.D.D.

(303) 697-8732

For additional information and listings of groups in Colorado, contact:

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(303) 287-6944

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