

## What is ADHD and How do You Manage it?

There are some children who suffer from Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). The symptoms exhibited by these children are:

- 1) Poor attention span and concentration - unless totally engrossed in something (like a computer game).
- 2) Their memorizing powers are low and they have poor concentration.
- 3) Impulsiveness - the trait of doing things without thinking first
- 4) Their frequent temper tantrums and outbursts are a result of easy frustration

While most children as well as adults face similar difficulties during daily routine, those children who suffer from ADHD have a far larger frequency of these difficulties. The extent is so acute that they are unable to undertake tasks such as:

- a) Participating in activities at school such as getting work done, paying attention, maintaining focus, being attentive in class etc.
- b) Participating in healthy activities at home such as getting chores finished, maintaining cordial relations with siblings, maintaining a modicum of efficiency and getting things done on time.
- c) socially (unable to take turns or wait in line, bossy and overbearing, easily frustrated leading to temper outbursts and aggression, impulsive, so often in trouble for doing antisocial actions e.g. unwise &quot;practical jokes&quot;).

It would not be appropriate to include ADHD as an injuries or a disease as its onset is not dependent on a germ or any specific physical malfunction. This comes into effect only as a result of some part of the brain not working at peak efficiency and not contributing totally.

What is clear is that ADHD does run in families and is at least partially genetic - often a parent has the same symptoms. What is also clear is that the symptoms, and therefore the problems, are long term. They are not going to go away or be cured in a short period of time, but are almost certainly going to continue through into the teen years, and probably even into adulthood.

### HOW IS ADHD MANAGED?

The big concern for children with ADHD is the danger of developing long term complications. For example:

- a) Their fear of failure at school owing to poor concentration, leading to school drop out
- b) they may be constantly in trouble because of their impulsivity and so be excluded from school and end up with the police,
- c) Their fear of taking recourse to anti-depressants such as drinks, drugs, crime etc to avoid getting anxious and depressed.

All of these, in turn, can lead to long term complications that affect functioning in adulthood.

The goal of management is, therefore, to prevent complications. This is a long term process, so the most important people to take charge of this are the parents. It is you as parents who have to live with the child, you who are most concerned about his/her long term well-being, and you who know your child best. If you do not take an active role in managing the difficulties then whatever else other people do will be unlikely to make much difference. However, if you do your part then there is much that others can do to help you along the way. Effective management is likely to include the following components:

COMMITTED PARENTS who are ready to support their child in full. Through the information available to the parents through the books, videos, Cds and internet, the parents should be able to help their ADHD afflicted child. A word of caution here is that along with all the information, there is a lot of mis-information also available on the net and other sources. This skewed information might cause a problem in understanding the condition of ADHD. There is no magic cure available for ADHD, anybody who claims to have a magic cure is lying!

GOOD COMMUNICATION is very essential between parents, support groups and the school teachers. If all three groups care to communicate and

solve particular problems it will be beneficial for the child.

It is a known fact that children with ADHD do better in ORGANIZED, quiet and structured and low stimulation ENVIRONMENT, but become worse in chaotic, unorganized and busy homes and classrooms. As a loving parent and a well wisher you will want the child to be better adjusted. Hence it will be a good idea to reorganize your home so that it keeps the child with ADHD calm and less stressful. And if the same can also be done in the school for the ADHD children, then it will help these children to be better adjusted in life.

**CLEAR BEHAVIORAL MANAGEMENT STRATEGY** Children with ADHD have to be given clear and exact instructions and expectations. If they are clear on the reward and punishment system then they will adjust their behavior accordingly. The support or the social worker can help you devise strategies for a Clear behavioral management program to help your child.

**SUPPORT FOR THE PARENTS.** Looking after children with ADHD can be very stressful for the parents. Bringing up these children can be very taxing. At times it may lead to depression and marital breakdown in parents. To help the parents to cope with the stress of bringing up a ADHD child, the parents should also consult the parent support groups and parents training groups, marital counseling, and family therapy etc.

**MEDICATION.** Medication is not a cure, but can be an invaluable help. Getting it right is important and so you will need to work closely with your key worker and doctor. The goal of medication is to reduce the symptoms so as to give the child the opportunity to learn academic, social, and other life skills. By itself, however, it is unlikely to solve all the problems and so cannot be used as an excuse to opt out of the above ingredients.

ADHD patients are given various medicines. Most of these are stimulants and a new rage is a medicine called atomoxetine. This is a new medicine for ADHD and is seen to be working very well and with negligible side effects. More information on this new wonder drug could be sought from the doctor.

As health professionals we cannot raise your child for you, nor can we solve all your problems as you travel with your child along life's journey. What we can do, however, is to assist you in getting unstuck when you get stuck along the way. We will try to help you to sort out all of the above points as best you can.

But, in the end, it is you and your family who have to live with it, and so the more you learn about it, and the more you learn the best ways to manage it, the better your chances of a good outcome.

### About the Author

Dr. Noel Swanson hosts a very interesting website on [parenting](#), packed full of free advice for dealing with your children's [ADHD](#) you should pay it a visit.

Source: <http://www.howidefeated.com>