

# ADHD: quick guide

Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, for care and education staff

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ADHD is a condition where the brain works differently to most people. It can affect concentration, sitting still and controlling impulses.

## Signs in children

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- **Inattentive:** easily distracted, hard to follow instructions, forgetting everyday tasks
- **Hyperactive and impulsive:** lots of energy, fidgeting, talking a lot, hard to wait their turn, interrupting
- Symptoms usually start before 12
- Girls more often have inattentive signs, which can be harder to spot

## Signs in adults

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- Easily distracted or forgetful
- Hard to organise time or finish tasks
- Losing things often
- Restless, or a lot of energy
- Very talkative or interrupting
- Quick decisions without thinking ahead

## Diagnosis and support

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- Speak to a GP first, who may refer to a specialist for assessment.
- Support can include exercise, good sleep and a balanced diet; adjustments at school, at home or at work; talking therapies such as CBT; and medicines started by a specialist.

## Everyday ways to help

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- ☐ Short, clear instructions, one step at a time
- ☐ Predictable routines, with warning of changes
- ☐ Fewer distractions where possible
- ☐ Movement breaks
- ☐ Notice and praise what goes well
- ☐ Follow the person's plan and involve them in what works

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**Sources** (checked 16 September 2026): NHS: ADHD in children and young people (reviewed 19 March 2025); NHS: ADHD in adults (reviewed 19 March 2025).

A quick-reference resource only. Always follow the person's care plan, your organisation's policies and procedures, and current national guidance.

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