

So What Does Adult ADHD Look Like?

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Adults are more frequently presenting to their doctors concerned they have Attention- Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). In the past, ADHD was not considered to be a problem of adult age. However, research in the past 20 years has shown that approximately 5% of the adult population suffers with ADHD leading to struggles in their social, family, and marital lives. In addition, there is career underachievement, as well as lost potential and opportunity. About 50% of individuals with ADHD diagnosed in childhood may experience significant symptoms as adults. It is a common belief that those with ADHD are hyperactive. However, many suffer with only inattention, especially newly-diagnosed adults.

ADHD is diagnosed in adults by a careful history that dates back to childhood, uncovering its origin in early life. Often newly diagnosed adults are discovered when their children are diagnosed. Adults manifest different symptoms than children due to lifespan issues.

Symptoms common in adults:

- Difficulty sustaining attention with organizational/work related issues
- Frequently misses appointments/commitments
- Forgetfulness

- Paying bills late
- Difficulty keeping household clean and organized
- Tardiness with getting kids to school, mealtimes, homework
- Fidgets
- Talks a lot
- Being on-the-go all the time
- Reckless driving
- Frequent job changes
- Quick to anger
- Struggles with parenting due to impulsivity and poor organization
- Impulsive comments, or interruption of conversations

The traditional criteria for ADHD can be found here:
www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/adhd/diagnosis.html.

If you suspect that you have ADHD, confer with your primary care doctor. You can expect a history and an ADHD scale to help in diagnosis. With an established diagnosis, options for treatment include:

- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) alone
- Medication alone (including stimulants and non-stimulants)
- Medication and CBT together
- Exercise, Yoga
- Healthy diet
- Life Coaching

Treatment choice depends on factors such as other possible difficulties commonly seen with adult ADHD, including substance abuse, low self-esteem, depression, anxiety, and

interpersonal struggles. ADHD is a complex medical disorder at any age.

Resources:

<http://www.chadd.org>

<http://www.add.org>

<http://www.help4adhd.org>

<http://www.adhdsupport.com/adhd-in-adults.aspx>