

# What is ADD / ADHD?

## Defining ADD/ADHD

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Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is a mental disorder in which an individual has severe impairments in their ability to control attention, impulsivity, and/or hyperactivity that are not normal for their age. These symptoms must occur in multiple settings (e.g., home *and* school, not just home), and they must be present before the age of 12.

## Symptoms

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### Hyperactivity

- Constantly moving or “on the go”
- Difficulty sitting still
- Nonstop talking
- Fidgeting and squirming
- Difficulty with quiet tasks

### Impulsivity

- Impatient
- Blurt out comments / Speaks out of turn
- Does not consider consequences before acting
- Difficulty waiting

### Inattention

- Difficulty maintaining focus on one task
- Easily distracted
- Forgetful
- Miss details
- Difficulty following instructions
- May seem to not listen when spoken to
- Difficulty starting and completing tasks

## Other ADD/ADHD facts

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- Individuals with ADHD have actual physical limitations related to brain development that make it very difficult to control hyperactivity, impulsivity, and inattention.
- Children with ADHD frequently get in trouble at home or school because their symptoms can be disruptive. It’s important to know that these children often don’t intend to be rude, defiant, or disruptive—they simply haven’t developed the ability to control their behavior.
- The symptoms of ADHD can be minimized through the use of medication, behavioral interventions, and lifestyle changes.
- ADHD is not a reflection of a person’s intelligence. Symptoms can occur in those with both high and low IQs.