ATTENTION-DEFICIT / HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER
STARTER GUIDE FOR PARENTS & GUARDIANS

The following information can help you determine whether your child may have Attention Deficit / Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). Children with ADHD may have trouble paying attention, act without thinking about the results, or be overly active. This guide will not cover the exact treatment for every child, but will give a general idea of what to expect.

Deciding if a child has ADHD involves several steps. There is no single test to diagnose ADHD. Anxiety, depression and certain types of learning disabilities can have similar symptoms. One step is to schedule a medical evaluation by your child’s physician, which would include hearing and vision tests to rule out other problems.

Once you have the evaluation scheduled, print and complete the attached ADHD checklist. It may be helpful to do so with another adult who spends time with your child, such as a teacher or caregiver. You will want to share the results of your checklist with your child’s provider during the evaluation.

If ADHD is diagnosed by your physician, it is usually treated with a combination of behavior therapy and medication. For preschool-age children (4-5 years of age), behavior therapy is recommended as the first line of treatment.

No single treatment approach is the answer for every child. A comprehensive treatment plan will include close monitoring and follow-up appointments. Modifications of the treatment plan may be needed along the way. If medication is prescribed by your provider, your child will need a return visit within 30 days for monitoring.

Other treatments that might be helpful to you and your child, but which insurance may not cover, include:

- Parent and Family Support Groups
- Summer Day Treatment for Children
- Social Skills Training for Children

In summary, if you believe that your child may be experiencing symptoms of ADHD, use the attached checklist, talk to other adults who spend time with him or her, and seek a medical exam from your child’s physician. There is a variety of symptoms that can mimic ADHD, and a thorough evaluation can help clarify the problem.
ADHD Checklist:  
Signs and Symptoms of attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder

To use the checklist included in this guide, fill out the child’s name, age and today’s date and then check off the signs or symptoms the child has shown. Take the completed checklist to your child’s health care provider to discuss your child’s options for evaluation and treatment.

Child’s Name: ______________________________ Age: ______________________________

Today’s Date: ______________________________

Check any symptoms that have been present for the past six months.

Inattention:

☐ Often does not give close attention to details or makes careless mistakes in schoolwork, work, or other activities.

☐ Often has trouble keeping attention on tasks or play activities.

☐ Often does not seem to listen when spoken to directly.

☐ Often does not follow through on instructions and fails to finish schoolwork, chores, or duties in the workplace (loses focus, gets sidetracked).

☐ Often has trouble organizing activities.

☐ Often avoids, dislikes, or doesn’t want to do things that take a lot of mental effort for a long period of time (such as schoolwork or homework).

☐ Often loses things needed for tasks and activities (e.g. toys, school assignments, pencils, books, or tools).

☐ Is often easily distracted.

☐ Is often forgetful in daily activities.
Hyperactivity/Impulsivity:

- Often fidgets with hands or feet, or squirms in seat when sitting still is expected.
- Often gets up from seat when remaining in seat is expected.
- Often excessively runs about or climbs when and where it is not appropriate (adolescents or adults may feel very restless).
- Often has trouble playing or doing leisure activities quietly.
- Is often “On the go” or often acts as if “driven by a motor”.
- Often talks excessively.
- Often blurts out answers before questions have been finished.
- Often has trouble waiting one’s turn.
- Often interrupts or intrudes on others (e.g., butts into conversations or games).

Content source: Division of Human Development and Disability, National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention