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ADHD: Symptoms in Adults

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Overview

Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) in an adult is often not noticed because the person may maintain relationships and hold a steady job. It is not unusual for a parent to discover they have ADHD when their child is diagnosed with the disorder.

The most common types of ADHD symptoms in adults are attention problems and hyperactivity.

Attention problems

Adults with ADHD often find it hard to:

- Finish tasks that don't interest them or aren't easy. But they may become obsessed with activities that they find interesting and enjoy.
- Keep relationships.
- Focus their attention on conversations, reading materials, or jobs. They may change jobs a lot.
- Remember things. They may misplace or lose things.
- Pay attention. They are easily distracted. They find it hard to focus on one task.
- Think before they act. They may make quick decisions. They may act before they think about the effect of their actions.

Hyperactivity

Adults with ADHD may:

- Fidget. They may swing their legs, shift in their seats, or tap their fingers.
- Move around a lot. They may feel "revved up" or on the go. They may not be able to slow down until they are very tired.
- Find it hard to relax. They may feel restless and find it hard to do quiet things like read or watch TV.

ADHD in adults may affect:

- Job performance. They may find it hard to organize their work, manage their time, and focus on one task at a time. They may forget, misplace, or lose things. They may quit their jobs out of boredom.
- Relationships. Adults with ADHD may find it hard to focus their attention on conversations. It is hard for them to "read" the behavior and moods of others and express their own feelings.
- Temper. They may get easily frustrated. This often can make it harder for them to deal with stress. These adults may overreact and have a short, quick temper.
- The ability to solve problems. Adults who have a hard time waiting for things they want may act before they think about the effect of their actions. They may take part in risky behaviors. These include unprotected sex, unsafe driving, alcohol and drug use, or unwise business ventures.

Credits

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