

# ADHD

## Information Sheet for Teenagers



## What is ADHD?

Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is linked to how your brain works. We do not know the exact cause, but it is believed to be due to an imbalance of certain chemicals in the brain. ADHD can run in families and in your school, you will not be the only person with ADHD.

## What are the characteristic features of ADHD?

- Hyperactivity – e.g. - fidgety, restless, uncomfortable sitting still
- Impulsivity – e.g. - impatient, poor judgement, speaking before thinking
- Inattention – e.g. – disorganised, forgetful, often loses things, persistent day dreaming, may not follow through on instructions.

## How can this affect you?

As a teenager with ADHD you may react to some of your problems more rapidly than others would do and have lower tolerance levels that may cause you to go off at the deep end more frequently.

You may also find that you have more problems with self-esteem and more arguments with your parents than teenagers without ADHD.



## What can help?

Talking with family, teachers and your friends is the key to helping you all work together.

### You can help yourself in the following ways:

- Find out as much as you can about ADHD

Good ways to do this include:

- ✓ Talking to people – doctors, nurses, psychologists, teachers
- ✓ Reading books about ADHD
- ✓ Using the internet – there is good information on the ADDISS website at [www.addiss.co.uk](http://www.addiss.co.uk)
- Developing a daily routine may help you in getting to school in the mornings, or doing your homework
- Do not be afraid to ask anyone – e.g. teachers or your parents – to repeat instructions. It is better than making them up if you cannot remember them!
- Break down large tasks into smaller ones. Set yourself a deadline for completing each step and give yourself a small reward when completed
- Make a 'to do list' for each day
- Try working in a quiet area, away from possible distractions
- Take regular short breaks
- Use post-it notes to remind yourself to do things. Stick them where you will see them – on the fridge or your mirror.



## Medication

There are medicines that can help the symptoms of ADHD which your specialist doctor or nurse will discuss with you and your family. Discuss your own wishes regarding medication with your family and specialist. Different amounts are needed depending on each individual young person. It can take time to get the dosage right and you may need to discuss this with your specialist doctor or nurse between review appointments.

Not every young person benefits from medication, so it may not be right for you. For further information, please see specific ADHD and medication leaflets.

- If you often forget to take your medication, think of a way you can be reminded...
- If you find it embarrassing to take medication during school time, speak to your specialist about alternative methods of medication, to avoid having to take it during the school day.

## Who can help?

It is important to work closely with your parents and school.

It may be helpful to identify a member of staff who you feel comfortable with and can approach for support and help. Try to meet with them regularly.

In school you can also access support via your Head of Year, Form Tutor and the school nurse. Do not be afraid to ask.

