

What is ADHD?

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder affects areas of the brain involved in attention, concentration and impulsivity. Children may exhibit poor behaviour, be fidgety or speak without thinking beforehand. These characteristics may lead to challenging behaviour at home and school.

ADHD is not a disease and it is not caused by poor parenting; there is no evidence that it is caused by a chaotic family environment, eating too much sugar or watching too much television.

ADHD cannot be cured, but it can be managed, although this will be dependent on the severity of the symptoms. ADHD is classed as a Specific Learning Difficulty.

What causes ADHD?

The cause of ADHD is not fully known, but there are many theories, including genetic causes, structural brain differences and changes in the action of chemicals in the brain.

What is also known is that ADHD affects areas of the brain involved in problem solving, planning and impulse control, in other words, our executive functioning which is located in the area of the brain called the frontal lobe.

Other potential factors that may contribute to the possibility of ADHD are:

- premature birth before the 37th week
- low birth weight
- smoking, alcohol or drug abuse during pregnancy.

Prevalence

ADHD is one of the most common behavioural disorders in children and adolescence. According to the [National Institute for Health and Care Excellence](#) ADHD affects approximately two to five percent of school-aged children and young people in the UK.

Boys are more likely than girls to be diagnosed, but this is thought to be due to an under representation in referrals to ADHD services. Approximately 60-80 percent of children with ADHD will have at least one other [condition such as dyslexia or dyspraxia](#).

How ADHD is treated

Medication is one type of treatment which is designed to control the imbalance of the neurotransmitters in the brain. There are different medications which act on various areas in the brain involved with attention, concentration, impulse and behaviour.

Other treatments include cognitive behaviour therapy, social-skills training and psychoeducation. The latter is a discussion-based therapy involving the parents and the child discussing how ADHD affects them, along with strategies to manage this. Some parents consider that diet may impact on some of the symptoms of ADHD.

Other approaches

- Having a set routine
- Clear boundaries
- Keeping instructions clear
- Giving positive feedback
- Provide stimulating activities
- Frequent breaks to allow movement

In summary

ADHD is a neurological disorder which impacts on behaviour. Pupils who have ADHD can be easily stigmatised and labelled as lazy or naughty. Observing and recording the child's characteristics and behaviours will help in a diagnosis and also enable classroom strategies to be put in place.

This is an extract from EduCare's [ADHD Awareness training course](#) which has been developed in partnership with SEND experts [Connect](#). As well as the above information the course also contains information and guidance on diagnosing ADHD, how ADHD can affect learning as well as practical tips to support those with ADHD.

The course can be [purchased online for £9.50](#), or can be combined with courses on [Dyslexia](#) and [Autism](#) and bought as a [SEND Awareness](#) package.

Customers who already use EduCare for Education can purchase the SEND Awareness package as an addition to their service. Get in touch to find out more – email online@educare.co.uk or call 01926 436 219.