WHAT IS ADHD?

Attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is the name of a group of behaviours found in many children and adults. ADHD is a problem with inattentiveness, over-activity, impulsivity, or a combination. They must be out of the normal range for a child's age and development. People who have ADHD have trouble paying attention in school, at home or at work. Kids with ADHD act without thinking, are hyperactive, and have trouble focusing. These behaviours contribute to significant problems in relationships, learning & behaviour. ADHD is more common in boys than in girls. It affects about 3 - 5% of school aged children.

What are the symptoms of ADHD? The symptoms of ADHD fall into three groups:

Inattentive symptoms:
1. Fails to give close attention to details or makes careless mistakes in schoolwork
2. Has difficulty keeping attention during tasks or play
3. Does not seem to listen when spoken to directly
4. Does not follow through on instructions and fails to finish schoolwork.
5. Has difficulty organizing tasks and activities
6. Avoids or dislikes tasks that require sustained mental effort (such as schoolwork)
7. Often loses toys, assignments, pencils, books, or tools needed for tasks or activities
8. Is easily distracted; is often forgetful in daily activities

Hyperactivity symptoms:
1. Fidgets with hands or feet or squirms in seat
2. Leaves seat when remaining seated is expected
3. Runs about or climbs in inappropriate situations. Has difficulty playing quietly
4. Is often "on the go," acts as if "driven by a motor," talks excessively

Impulsivity symptoms:
1. Blurt out answers before questions have been completed
2. Has difficulty awaiting turn
3. Interrupts or intrudes on others (butts into conversations or games)

"But all kids act this way at times............."?

Of course, all kids (especially younger ones) act this way at times, particularly when they're anxious or excited. But the difference with ADHD is that symptoms are present over a longer period of time and occur in different settings. They impair a child's ability to function socially, academically, and at home.

What causes ADHD?

ADHD is a neurobiological disorder. It may run in families, but it is not clear exactly what causes it.
Things that don't cause ADHD:

- Too much sugar
- Too little sugar
- Lack of vitamins
- Too much TV
- Video games

Expectations (prognosis)

ADHD is a long-term, chronic condition. If it is not treated appropriately, ADHD may lead to:

- Drug and alcohol abuse
- Failure in school
- Problems keeping a job
- Trouble with the law

About half of children with ADHD will continue to have troublesome symptoms of inattention or impulsivity as adults.

How Does ADHD Affect School Performance?

- Lower average marks, more failed grades, more expulsions,
- Difficulty sustaining attention to a task may contribute to missing important details in assignments, daydreaming during lectures and other activities, and difficulty organizing assignments.
- Hyperactivity may be expressed in either verbal or physical disruptions in class.
- Impulsivity may lead to careless errors, responding to questions without fully formulating the best answers, and only attending to activities that are entertaining or novel.
- Overall, students with ADHD may experience more problems with school performance than their nondisabled peers.

Treatment:

- The good news is that with proper treatment, kids with ADHD can learn to successfully live with and manage their symptoms
- A combination of medication and behavioural treatment works best. There are several different types of ADHD medications that may be used alone or in combination.
- A team effort, with parents, teachers and doctors working together, is the best way to help your child.
- Symptoms of ADHD often get better as children grow older and learn to adjust. Hyperactivity usually stops in the late teenage years. But about half of children who have ADHD continue to be easily distracted, have mood swings, hot tempers and are unable to complete tasks

Prevention

Although there is no proven way to prevent ADHD, early identification and treatment can prevent many of the problems associated with ADHD

Related Problems

One of the difficulties in diagnosing ADHD is that it's often found in conjunction with other problems. These are called coexisting conditions, and about two thirds of kids with ADHD have one. The most common coexisting conditions are: Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD) and Conduct Disorder (CD); Learning Disabilities; Mood Disorders; Anxiety Disorders.