

Question: My pediatrician told me that my child has ADHD. What is ADHD? Is it new? And how can I help my child deal with this?

Answer: A lot of parents today have questions about Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). With such a diagnosis come concerns about a child's success ability and welfare. Everyone has seen a child with ADHD. He or she is the one on the plane who gets up ten times to use the restroom in the two hour flight. They are the child who appears to run circles around their peers and all the adults around them. However, when handled properly, ADHD can be effectively treated and managed.

ADHD has four basic symptoms, severe inattention, distractibility, hyperactivity, and impulsivity. Not every child has every symptom. Because of that, the current Diagnostic Manual list three types of ADHD, ADHD predominately inattentive, ADHD predominately hyperactive-impulsive and ADHD combined type.

ADHD is not a new phenomenon. As early as 1902, children with severe levels of inattention and impulse control problems were being written about by professionals of that time (Phares, 2003). The first official category in the Diagnostic Manual was in 1968 as Hyperkinetic Reaction of Childhood or Adolescence. Since then the diagnosis of ADHD has been researched and better defined into what it is today.

Several things can be done to help you and your child better deal with the ADHD. More than likely, your pediatrician has recommended a medicine to help deal with your child's ADHD. Medication is a part of dealing with your child's ADHD. Many parents worry about their child being drugged or walking around like a zombie. However, when the right prescription is closely monitored by your pediatrician and you keep in close communication with your physician about your child, this is less likely to occur. Furthermore, studies have shown that there are few negative long-term side effects from the ADHD medications (Reisser, 1997).

There are also two other parts of dealing with ADHD, you and the school. One way to help your child is to seek out a therapist or counselor. Cognitive Behavioral Family Therapy may be exceptionally beneficial as it will teach you and your child ways to better deal with current behaviors and learn new ways of interacting together. It is also vital to get your school involved by making your child's teacher aware of the diagnosis and letting them know that your child is on medication and is also seeking treatment with a therapist. Using all three aspects together will help you and your child better deal with and live with ADHD.

Phares, V. (2003). *Understanding Abnormal Child Psychology*. Danvers, MA: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Reisser, P. & The Focus on the Family Physicians Resource Council (1997). *Complete Book of Baby & Child Care*. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.