

Creating a Treatment Plan for ADHD

If your child is having problems with school, at home, or with friends because of ADHD, a treatment plan is needed. You will need to work with the treatment team and the school to create and follow the treatment plan.

A treatment plan should include:

- specific, measurable goals
- a plan for achieving the treatment goals
- a timeframe for achieving the treatment goals
- plans for follow-up

Treatment options

Over the past 40 years, many treatments for ADHD have been studied. Some definitely work, some definitely do not work, and some are still under consideration. The treatments that have been shown to work in many different trials are medication and behavioural treatment.

Medication

For most children, medication is very effective for the core ADHD symptoms of inattention, hyperactivity, and impulsivity. However, medication is not a "magic fix." By the time a child is diagnosed with ADHD, he has probably missed out on learning social skills and study skills. He may need behavioural treatment to help with these.

Behavioural treatment

Behavioural treatment is aimed at providing parents and teachers with strategies for managing their child's ADHD symptoms and associated behaviour. Behaviour therapy can also help parents and teachers teach children skills such as:

- starting and finishing tasks
- following rules
- managing their own behaviour

Behavioural treatment can address problems with a child's social skills, school work, and home life. It can also improve the child's self-esteem and help the child and his parents feel more in control. Behavioural treatment has been found equally effective as stimulant use in the treatment of ADHD symptoms over the long-term.



Combination therapy

Behavioural treatment and medication work best in combination. For this reason, your child's treatment plan may include both treatments.

Complementary and alternative therapies

In addition to behavioural treatment and medication, many researchers and parents of children with ADHD have become interested in alternative options. Many of these alternatives are still controversial, and there is little support for using any of them as the sole treatment for ADHD. However, there is evidence that some alternative treatments can be beneficial when combined with an overall treatment plan for ADHD.

The different types of treatment are discussed in more detail in this section. Click the links on the left to learn more.

The treatment team

For a child with ADHD, consistency is essential. Treatment for ADHD is most successful when everyone who is involved with the child's care works together and understands the treatment plan.

The core treatment team for ADHD includes:

- the child's parents
- the child's teacher

The treatment team may also include:

- a doctor, who can prescribe medication for ADHD and help develop the treatment plan
- a psychologist, who can help children deal with the social, behavioural, or emotional difficulties that often come with ADHD and help develop the treatment plan
- a counsellor, who can help children and families deal with lifestyle changes, problems, and relationships; a counsellor may be a psychologist, a social worker, or someone who is specially trained in helping children with ADHD
- a special education teacher, who can help adapt education materials and techniques to meet the specific needs of the child with ADHD

Monitoring and follow-up

Your child should have regular appointments with the doctor to assess:

- general physical health
- the effects of treatment
- medication side effects

Notes: