

I have ADHD... but what does that mean?



Pride in our children's, young people's and families' services

A guide to ADHD

We know that it can be confusing when you are given a label and sometimes it is hard to know what to ask when you are in clinic so we thought this guide might be helpful for you to have a look at.

So what is ADHD?

ADHD stands for **A**ttention **D**eficit **H**yperactivity **D**isorder.

It is a neurodevelopmental condition which means that your brain is developing and works in a slightly different way to other people.

Imagine your brain is as fast as a sports car but has the brakes of a bike which means it is really speedy but more difficult for you to stop and think!



ADHD has three main symptoms (on the next page you can see what these might look like)

1. **Inattention**
2. **Hyperactivity**
3. **Impulsivity**

How do you know if someone has ADHD?

You can't always tell someone has ADHD by looking at them and you can't tell by an x ray or a blood test.

For us to say that you've got ADHD we have to answer these questions

Did these signs start before the age of 7?

Do you have these symptoms at school and at home?

Is there anything else that might be making it hard for you to sit still and do your work?

We get these answers by talking to you and your parents and we ask your school for some feedback. This is to help make sure that you have the right support.

Does this sound like you?

I am always losing things

I can sometimes get in trouble for interrupting

I might shout things out

People say it is like I am driven by a motor or batteries that never run out!

I try to get out of doing things I find hard

In lessons I find what is happening outside more interesting

I am usually fiddling with something

Taking turns is hard for me

I find it hard to do what I'm told

I sit and daydream

I am always 'on the go'

I can't sit still

I talk a lot – I can sometimes get in trouble for talking too much

There are lots of beliefs out there about ADHD which we know are not true...

ADHD is not real; it is just an excuse for naughty kids or bad parents.

TRUE

FALSE

This is not true there is proof to say that people's brains with ADHD work differently to people without ADHD so will need some more support in some areas.

Only boys can have ADHD

TRUE

FALSE

Both girls and boys can have ADHD but it might be more difficult to notice the symptoms in girls.

I can't do well because I have ADHD

TRUE

FALSE

It can feel really tough when you find things in school difficult when it seems easy to other people but there are lots of things that can help.

What do Jamie Oliver, Richard Branson, Jim Carrey, Michael Phelps and Emma Watson all have in common?

They have ADHD!

Michael Phelps holds the record for the most Olympic medals of all time – his extra energy would have been helpful for all his training.



What helps people with ADHD?

When you have a brain like a race car it can be hard to keep up and remember what you need to do when. Some people like to have pictures to remind them or have a list.



It is important to celebrate when you do things well and when you work hard



Sometimes you will need a chance to use some of your energy or have something to fiddle with.



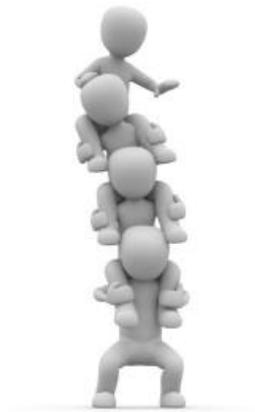
And sometimes you might go off track and need some help to get on the right track or know when to stop.



You might need a little more support in school to help you to focus



Or with making friends



Some children with ADHD find it hard to get enough sleep





Leaflet published: July 2018
Leaflet review date: July 2019

Patient Advice and Liaison Service

For information about CPFT services or to raise an issue, contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on Freephone 0800 376 0775, or e-mail pals@cpft.nhs.uk

Out-of-hours service for CPFT mental health service users

Please call **NHS 111** for health advice and support.

If you require this information in another format such as braille, large print or another language, please let us know.

CPFT supports the **HeadtoToe Charity** – visit www.HeadToToeCharity.org for details on how you can help



HQ Elizabeth House, Fulbourn Hospital, Cambridge CB21 5EF
T 01223 219400 **F** 01480 398501 www.cpft.nhs.uk



A member of Cambridge University Health Partners