



What is it like to have ADHD?

My name is Jamie, I have a condition called Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder or ADHD for short. Some people refer to it as ADD which is ADHD without the hyperactivity.

People with ADHD are happiest when they are undertaking activities which require a lot of energy. Having ADHD means that people will stand out from the crowd, they may have been labelled as being naughty, a trouble maker or a dreamer. They are likely to find it very difficult to keep still.



Fiddling with something can help people with ADHD to focus but it is very hard to sit still for long periods in class or not calling out.

Being constantly restless occurs at home too. Sitting still when we go out say to a restaurant is tough too. My parents find it hard to get a babysitter for me which means they can't go out much on their own.



Burning off energy is a good way of helping someone with ADHD, but caring for them all the time can be very tiring. Children with ADHD who are hyperactive can be boisterous and this can cause difficulties and fallings out on the playground. Not having a good nights sleep can make things worse during the day, which makes learning even more difficult. At night time it is hard to stop thoughts racing through the mind

I tend to talk a lot and can be noisy which can cause problems at mealtimes and early in the morning when everyone else is asleep.



Talking a lot can often be good in some situations, for example being a good communicator with someone new or who may be shy. Sometimes because people with ADHD are in such a hurry or are so excitable their words can become muddled and they need to be reminded to slow down.

Having ADHD can also mean I rush through my school work; this has an impact on my grades.



The presentation of work and writing from people with ADHD can often be poor because their train of thought has become muddled and their handwriting is hard to read.

Sometimes people with ADHD are described as impulsive because they may say or do things without thinking. They may appear to be rude as they may interrupt conversations and may give incorrect answers because they haven't listened properly.

Sometimes I behave in certain ways that are silly or dangerous. I tend to get labelled as the class clown because of my behaviour

Children with ADHD often struggle to understand the consequences of their behaviour on others. They may readily accept a dare if urged on by others, even if told not to do this countless times before.



Health and safety can be problematic for children with ADHD, especially around the roads. Roadside noises can be distracting as can talking to friends, listening to music or talking on the phone around the roads.

Controlling my temper can be difficult, I often end up arguing with friends, family and even teachers. Sometimes people in my class don't want to be around me.

Self-help strategies are really useful in trying to manage anger or cool down.

Having ADHD means having a good imagination, sometimes people with ADHD are called "dreamers" because they might be imagining doing something else. In school it is important that children with ADHD are placed somewhere in the room where there are least distractions.



Having ADHD means that I often lose or mis-place things very easily.

Losing objects, the thread of conversations or instructions are common in people with ADHD. This can be difficult for children in school who often forget homework, PE kit etc. a diary is a useful reminder about expectations.

Adults working or living with children with ADHD can get a bit cross with children where they don't understand that the child is not being unreasonable or deliberately forgetful.



I see a paediatrician on a regular basis; he is very kind and listens to me and my parents and offers advice.



A special teacher called an educational psychologist is often asked by the school to undertake an assessment of any child who may have ADHD. ADHD is more common in boys than girls. Girls, more than boys tend to have ADD, which can make it harder to identify. Lots of reports are gathered as the person has to display symptoms in more than one place, e.g. at home and at school. ADHD can run in families, it is not due to bad parenting or eating certain foods, although a good diet and regular exercise is important. In ADHD there is a problem with transferring important chemical messages to those parts of the brain that are important for attention and impulse control.

Because it is now known that ADHD is caused by a chemical imbalance I have some medication to help correct some of this imbalance. It will not cure me but it helps me learn better and my behaviour has improved alongside my friendships



Children with ADHD need a lot of support to manage their behaviour such as:

- Rewards and behaviour books, setting achievable goals and targets
- Keeping calm when dealing with negative behaviours
- Time out and sanctions
- Clear rules and instructions
- Help with being organised
- Managing health and safety aspects e.g. road safety
- Family bonding and good routines
- Keeping active and fit with a good diet
- Celebrating strengths and achievements

Recommended reading, organisations and websites

- **ADDISS**

The National Attention Deficit Disorder Information and Support Service, Premier House, 112 Station Road, Edgware, Middlesex, HA8 7BJ. Tel: 020 89522800 www.addiss.co.uk

- **Family Lives**

Tel: 08088002222 <http://familylives.org.uk>

- **Living with ADHD**

Janssen-Cilag Ltd, 50-100 Holmers Farm Way, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire, HP12 4EG www.livingwithadhd.co.uk

Books

- Green, Christopher and Chee, Kit (1997) ***Understanding ADHD***
- Nadeau, Kathleen G and Dixon, Ellen B (2002) ***Learning to slow down and pay attention***, Washington, DC:Magination Press
- Yarney Susan (2013) ***Can I tell you about ADHD?*** Jessica Kingsley publishers, London