

10 Tips for Teens

Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder

1. Participate in your treatment. You are the expert about yourself. Be actively involved in setting your individual goals, making your treatment plan and attending appointments. Practice the skills and techniques you learn in treatment. Since most teens still live with their parents or other adults, treatment often includes these adults. Let your doctor and/or therapist know if you want some time to talk with them alone.

2. Ask questions. Ask your mental health provider and doctor to explain if they say things you don't understand, or if you have questions about ADHD and your treatment. Write down questions ahead of time and bring them to appointments.

3. Talk to your teachers about any difficulties you are having with the material taught in classes. Ask for help and let your teacher(s) know what your learning needs are.

4. Pay attention to your feelings. A lot of teens with ADHD can have feelings that are hard to deal with, like feeling anxious about school or having low self-esteem. Sometimes teens with ADHD can get into trouble with peer pressure and drugs or alcohol, which can make symptoms of ADHD much worse. You can ask to talk confidentially with your doctor/therapist if you are worried about any of these things.

5. Get support from family, friends and peers. You are not alone!

There are teen support groups where you can talk with other teenagers about how they deal with ADHD. Ask your therapist or doctor for information about support groups in your community like Children and Adults with ADHD (CHADD).

6. Care about yourself. Get enough sleep, proper nutrition and regular physical activity—these things can all help you control your energy and your ability to concentrate. Join an after-school activity; this is a great way to use your energy, feel good about yourself and make friends. Remember, alcohol and illegal drugs often worsen symptoms of ADHD and make life more difficult.

7. Take ADHD medications regularly. Talk to your parents, doctor or the nurse if you have any questions about your medications or if you have uncomfortable side effects. Ask your parents or another close adult to help you if you are having trouble remembering to take the medications.

8. Keep your appointments. This is your time—use it effectively. Call ahead if you need to change an appointment. Talk with your therapist or doctor if you are having trouble remembering appointments so that they can help you with this.

9. Create a routine/structure for yourself. Use a planner and/or calendar to stay on track with your goals, appointments, etc. Create lists for remembering daily tasks, and use other types of reminders to help you organize your day.

10. Learn about ADHD and how people with ADHD learn to cope effectively with their symptoms and live full and productive lives. Ask for written materials, and read information on the Internet or from the library. One place to start is the website for Children and Adults with ADHD (CHADD) www.chadd.org.

