

## ATTENTION DEFICIT HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER (ADHD)

In the last decade, scientists have learned much about the course of ADHD and are now able to identify and treat children, adolescents, and adults who have it. A variety of medications, behavior-changing therapies, and educational options are already available to help people with ADHD focus their attention, build self-esteem, and function in new ways.

### WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF ADULT ADHD?

We now know that children with ADHD do not necessarily outgrow the condition when they become adults. ADHD looks different in adults than it does in children, as there is generally a lack of obvious hyperactivity. However, older adolescents and adults may experience some form of hyperactivity, which appears as mental restlessness, constant fidgeting, or other symptoms which can frequently lead to difficulties in college, on the job, in relationships, and in daily living. Some typical presenting complaints for adults include:

1.	Poor school/work performance and poor sustained attention to reading, paperwork, or lectures
2.	Easily bored by tedious materials
3.	Poor organization and planning
4.	Procrastinating until deadlines are imminent
5.	Impulsive decision-making
6.	Restlessness, trouble staying in confined spaces
7.	Cannot work well independently
8.	Poor listening skills; doesn't listen carefully to directions
9.	Frequent impulsive job changes
10.	Poor academic grades despite solid intellectual ability
11.	Often late for work/appointments
12.	Frequently misplaces things
13.	Trouble thinking clearly, using sound judgment, especially under stress
14.	Impulsive comments to others
15.	Poor followup on commitment

### SOME STRATEGIES FOR COPING WITH ADHD

- When necessary, ask the instructor to repeat instructions, rather than guess.
- Break large assignments into small, simple tasks. Set a deadline for each task and reward yourself as you complete each one.
- Each day, make a list of what you need to do. Plan the best order for doing each task. Then make a schedule for doing them. Use a daily planner to keep yourself on track.
- Work in a quiet area, doing one thing at a time.
- Give yourself short breaks.
- Create a good routine every day and include exercise, eating a balanced diet and getting enough sleep.
- Write things you need to remember in a notebook with dividers. Write different kinds of information - like assignments, appointments and phone numbers - in different sections. Keep the book with you at all times.

The mainstay of ADHD treatment is pharmacotherapy. Counseling is also helpful along with medication to improve ability to focus and organize. For adults, stimulants and antidepressants are the medications most often used.

### WHAT TO DO IF YOU THINK YOU HAVE ADHD?

ADHD is diagnosed after thorough testing, usually by a psychologist or psychiatrist. To start the evaluation process, students may either:

1. Call **785-864-9507** to make an appointment with a Watkins Health Services' physician, **OR**
2. Go to [www.studenthealth.ku.edu](http://www.studenthealth.ku.edu), click on the **myWHS** icon, then login and continue by selecting 'Appointments' tab.

For a list of other area professionals who can do ADHD evaluations see Disability Resources at the University of Kansas: [www.disability.ku.edu](http://www.disability.ku.edu). Students should check with their insurance carrier to determine which providers would be covered for an evaluation.

### WATKINS HEALTH SERVICES (WHS) TREATMENT:

The guidelines for WHS to initiate a treatment plan, or continue an existing plan for medication have been developed by the WHS medical staff, the KU Office of Student Disability Services, and KU Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS). These guidelines include:

1. The student must present copies of at least two diagnostic tests done as part of an adult evaluation (EXAMPLES: WAIS III; WOODCOCK-JOHNSON III COGNITIVE AND ACHIEVEMENT TEST; CONNOR AD/HD RATING SCALE; CONNOR SYMPTOM CHECKLIST FOR ADULT ADD)
2. A comprehensive diagnostic evaluation at age 15 yrs. old (or older) including:
  - The evaluation having been performed within the previous 4 years,
  - Identification of the current functional issues,
  - A diagnostic statement, with clinical diagnosis, from the mental health professional who administered the testing,
  - A recommendation by the evaluator for a prescription as part of the treatment plan.
3. Any significant event that would affect diagnosis/function since the last evaluation will necessitate updated testing.
4. The student must submit any required evaluation documentation.

### MEDICATION REFILLS:

A student may continue a current course of ADHD medication by presenting a valid prescription at the Watkins Health Services (WHS) pharmacy. Because ADHD drugs are strictly controlled by the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) students may encounter some difficulties getting their medication when away from home. Kansas law mandates that ADHD medication prescriptions *must* be filled within six (6) months of being written. A prescription for these medications **cannot be phoned in to a pharmacy**. A written, dated prescription is required.

### Other KU Resources:

If you have questions about for learning disabilities or ADHD contact:

1. Academic Achievement & Access Center 785-864-4064; [www.achievement.ku.edu](http://www.achievement.ku.edu).
2. Disability Resources 785-864-2620; <http://www.disability.ku.edu>.