



Adult Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)



ADHD is a neurodevelopmental disorder. Symptoms start during childhood but may continue into adulthood, and some people are not diagnosed until they are older.

Common symptoms in adults include:

- Being forgetful, easily distracted, disorganized.
- Having difficulty starting and completing tasks, time management, and managing emotions such as irritability, anger, or impatience.

I think I might have ADHD, what now?

There are a few important things to know about diagnosing ADHD.

- It takes time—there is no test that can confirm a diagnosis.
- A series of visits is usually needed to gather information about your symptoms and how these affect your life. This also includes getting information from people that know you well, both as a child and an adult, such as your family, a friend, or co-worker.
- A high score or testing positive on an online ADHD test does not always mean you have ADHD.
- There are other health conditions that have similar symptoms to ADHD. More than half of adult patients with ADHD have another mental health condition such as anxiety, depression, or substance use.

How is adult ADHD treated?

There is no “one size fits all” when it comes to managing ADHD. Together with your health care professional, you will determine what is the right approach for you. Treating adult ADHD using a combination of approaches works best. This includes:

- 1) Education:** Learn more about adult ADHD. Refer to online resources, support groups, and tools.
- 2) Medication:** ADHD medications can help with symptoms. It may take time to find the right one and the right dose for you. These medications are generally well tolerated, but some people have side effects such as difficulty sleeping, low appetite, or an increase in heart rate or blood pressure. Regular follow-up with your health care professional is important.
- 3) Therapy and Tools:** Medication works best when combined with other strategies to help manage your symptoms such as:
 - Cognitive behavioural therapy—individually or in a group.
 - Putting workplace or school changes in place.
 - Tools to help organize and manage daily tasks.

IMPORTANT



The following can be harmful to your health:

- Taking ADHD medications that are not your own, taking more than you have been prescribed, or taking them with other drugs or substances. This is due to the possible harmful effects, such as heart issues or a decreased ability to make decisions.
- Trying to self-treat your ADHD symptoms with other substances like alcohol, nicotine, cannabis, or high-caffeine content drinks—these can make your ADHD symptoms worse.

Resources for adults with ADHD

Centre for ADHD Awareness, Canada (CADDAC). <https://caddac.ca/>

- Refer to: About ADHD; Programs & Events—Support Groups; Find a Resource
- Videos: <https://www.youtube.com/c/adhdvid>

Apps and online tools to help with organization and daily tasks:

- Evernote: <https://evernote.com/>
- Todoist: <https://todoist.com/>
- Ominifocus: <https://www.omnigroup.com/>

Check how ADHD medications can interact with other medications and substances.

- <https://www.drugcocktails.ca/>

Sources:

- 1)** Centre for ADHD Awareness, Canada (CADDAC) <https://caddac.ca/>;
- 2)** Canadian ADHD Resource Alliance (CADDRA) <https://www.caddra.ca>.

