



## A.D.H.D.

### Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder: A Guide For Christian Parents

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Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is a recognized medical problem with distinctive symptoms that often runs in families. Hyperactivity may not always be obvious. The condition is widespread, poorly understood and sometimes remains untreated. It often causes unhappiness in families, and at work, mainly due to others expecting too much. It affects a large number of school children and adults as well. Very often children are allergic to foods and colorings’.

The good news is that ADHD people are usually full of life, and are often intelligent. If you can bring out these special things in your child, it will make them feel good about themselves, and this is the aim of the treatment.

#### SUGGESTED DIAGNOSTIC CRITERIA FOR

#### ATTENTION DEFICIT HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER.

1. Six (or more) of the following symptoms of **inattention** that have persisted for at least six months to a degree that is not right with the developmental level:

##### **Inattention**

- (a) Often fails to give close attention to details or makes careless mistakes in schoolwork or other activities.
- (b) Often has difficulty sustaining attention in tasks or play activities.
- (c) Often does not seem to listen when spoken to directly.
- (d) Often does not follow through on instructions and fails to finish schoolwork, chores or duties in the workplace (not due to failure to understand instructions).
- (e) Often has difficulty organizing tasks and activities.
- (f) Often avoids, dislikes or doesn’t want to engage in tasks that require sustained mental effort, (such as schoolwork or homework).
- (g) Often loses things necessary for tasks or activities (e.g. toys, school assignments, pencils, books or tools).
- (h) Is often easily distracted by noise (e.g. in a classroom setting).
- (i) Is forgetful in daily activities.

##### **Hyperactivity**

- (a) Often fidgets with hands and feet or squirms in seat.
- (b) Often leaves seat in classroom or other situation in which remaining seated is expected, and walks around the room.
- (c) Often runs about or climbs excessively in situations in which it is not the right thing to do – in older children it may be limited to feelings of restlessness.
- (d) Has no fear of danger or of heights.
- (e) Restless legs that never stop moving.
- (f) Often has difficulty playing or engaging in leisure activities quietly.

- (g) Is often on the “go” all the time or often acts as if “driven by a motor”.
- (h) Often talks excessively.
- (i) Accident prone/and or uncoordinated.

### **Impulsivity**

- (i) Often blurts out answers before the questions have been completed.
- (j) Often has difficulty awaiting turn.
- (k) Often interrupts others (e.g. butts into conversations).
- (l) Some hyperactive-impulsive or inattentive symptoms that caused impairment are present before age seven.
- (m) Some symptoms are displayed in more than three settings (e.g. at school, at work, at home or when on outings).
- (n) Does your child have restless legs, that go backwards and forwards all the time?

### **WHAT WORKS.**

**The first thing to do is to take it to the Lord in Prayer. Pray about your child every day, and ask the Lord to guide you in the path of recovery, and show you what to do. This may take a while, but it will happen. Keep praying continually even if you don't see an immediately answer.**

1. Seek help through your Doctor or ask friends who have the same problem, and do as much reading about the problem as you can.
2. Seek as much up to date information as you can get about ADHD.
3. Share knowledge with others.
4. Seek to become your child's best friend. Tell him/her that you know that he/she has a problem, and you are going to work through it together.
5. Don't be afraid to try different things.
6. You may need to seek parent management help from a professional person.
7. Seek support for yourself as a parent.
8. **Keep your Sense of Humor.**
9. In raising children, there are no guarantees for success.
10. Believe in your child, and believe in yourself as a **good** parent.

### **THE FIRST STEP FOR DIETARY INTERVENTION**

Even before the diagnosis of ADHD has been made, it can be a good idea to first look at the person's diet.

We cannot ignore the relationship between certain foods and additives and their adverse effects on some children's mood, health, learning and behavior. For many years countless families have been helped in this way.

The following will help if you decide to take this approach first. A good book to read is Sue Dengate's Book 'Fed Up with ADHD'. Also check out her website for additional help [www.fedupwithfoodadditives.info](http://www.fedupwithfoodadditives.info).

The idea is to reduce the 'chemical load' (the poisons) in the body. None of the hundreds of additives permitted in our food have been tested for their effect on the nervous system. Children are particularly at risk for they do not have the ability to handle large quantities of any one substance.

With modern diets it is too easy to consume what can be toxic amounts of particular chemicals. Food intolerances and allergies are very widespread and often unrecognized. Ingredients of manufactured food and drink need to be checked out. The body has to break down the food we eat into what it can make use of – proteins, for example. It needs certain minerals and vitamins in small but enough quantities in order to function properly. Our well-being depends on a complex balance that comes by consuming the right foods on a daily basis. If, for example, we don't eat sufficient calories to provide the energy that we need for our daily activities, then we may lose weight and feel tired and have no energy.

Modern factory-produced foods, because of the way they have been highly processed, often lack many of the vital vitamins and minerals we need for growing bodies and minds. Vitamins and minerals are often added to packaged food for this reason.

In addition, many of the 'junk' foods we consume on a daily basis are colored, flavored and sweetened with artificial chemical additives, many of which, when taken in quantity and mixed together with others, can have bad effects on our health. Artificial colorings and preservatives in fizzy drinks, snacks etc., have been shown in many scientific studies to have a serious effect on the behavior of many people, especially children.

Eating a range of foods and drinks which contain chemical additives can create sensitivity to these products, so that an allergic reaction occurs when we eat them. It has been shown that many of the colorings, preservatives and flavorings can give asthmatic reactions. Remember your body is not equipped to deal with the range of chemical substances which are present in today's 'fast food diet'.

Aside from the problem of additives, we also have to be aware that many of the packaged snacks we eat consist of processed and refined foods, such as sugars and other things, which our bodies are not designed by nature to deal with. Try having a muesli bar and a piece of fruit, rather than iced buns and Coke. What about a nice salad sandwich instead of a pie and buns for a school lunch? Encourage your child to drink water and not fizzy drink. When you go to the supermarket to get your shopping, look at the labels on the tins or on the packets, to see that what you are buying has no harmful chemicals in them.

Take time every day to think about what you are eating or feeding your children, and how you feel. Do the kids eat breakfast? Their bodies and minds need input first thing in the morning. Filling the gap with a chocolate bar and coke at break time is not enough, and may be doing them more harm than good.

Does your child suffer from headaches, asthma attacks, eczema, stuffy nose, rashes? Can you relate any of these to what you eat? How is your child's concentration? Do you often find him irritable, depressed, or short tempered? **Many of these problems can be reactions to chemical food additives.**

These may also occur if we are allergic to certain basic foods such as dairy products – milk, cheese, butter – or, in some cases, to certain fruits and vegetables such as tomatoes, oranges or blackcurrants, which contain aspirin-like substances called salicylates.

**The important point to remember is that if you want to feel better, look better and work and play better, you need to .....WATCH WHAT YOU EAT.**

For dietary intervention you need to do TWO main things first:

## **ONE - AVOID FOODS CONTAINING:**

**A. ALL artificial colors** – all foods are labeled with a list of ingredients and you need to become a ‘label reader’. Some firms use numbers e.g. 110 (Sunset Yellow FCF 102 (Tartrazine) or 113 (Brilliant Blue FCF).

**B. Flavors** - (artificial and natural e.g. 621 (monosodium glutamate), which may be listed as Flavor enhancer, 627 (disodium guanylate).

**C. Preservatives** – (can cause overgrowth of bacteria and fungi etc). e.g. 210 Benzoic acid, 220 Sulphur dioxide, 230 Sodium nitrate. All manufactured and processed foods, such as chicken flavored chips, sausages, cordials etc. contain these.

**D. Antioxidants to avoid** – (Used to prevent oxidation of fats and oils), 320 BHA (Butylated Hydroxyanisole), 321 BHT (Butylated Hydroxy toluene), and 310 Propyl Gallate.

**Allergies and food intolerance** – elimination of certain foods are highly recommended.

## **TWO – REDUCE THE SALICYLATE CONTENT:**

Salicylates are naturally occurring substances similar to aspirin, having both good and bad reactions in the body. They occur mainly in acid fruit, some vegetables depending on the type of fruit, the climate, area grown, time of year harvested and the degree of ripeness. Some people are not allergic to ripe bananas, others are allergic to over ripe ones. Tolerance level will vary from person to person. You could start with 1 week (0-7 years), having no fruit and fruit juice. You will know at the end of that week if there is an intolerance, (9 years – 9 days; 12 years – 12 days etc), because your child’s behavior will be better, have no change, or be worse.

After a period of time when you start to see acceptable behavior and a good response you may want to challenge and add some fruit (salicylate) back into the diet.

To begin with, try one fruit at a time. Use several times for about a week, unless there is a reaction. Saturday (or school holidays) is a good time, so that you can observe over a few days, with no schoolwork or pressure in the classroom.

If you get a reaction, wait 3 days and try another. Some people can tolerate oranges, but not apples, and vice versa. Many individuals may tolerate one form (raw, fresh), but not other (cooked dried).

Also take into account any known food intolerances such as caffeine, wheat etc. Changing food habits can be a little daunting at first, but it is worth a try, as many who do, get improvements within the time allotted. (This can vary and depends on the previous diet of the person).

It really helps to keep a food diary, as the onset of the problems (i.e. a reaction), can be a few minutes to 2-3 days later, after a child has eaten something they are allergic too. When the entire family sticks to eliminating ‘problem’ foods, they can also benefit. Dad’s migraines can disappear, Mums pre menstrual tension is no more, and the child doing “OK’ in the family, achieves even more and you see the child with ADHD as they really are – a wonderful and caring human being.

Write down everything eaten and positive and negative behavior each day. It is your best means of finding out what foods cause each reaction since so much is on trial and error.

If after a length of time, you do not see significant improvement, **do not give up**. Ask advice with your food diary and get help to interpret where the lack of success may be. It could mean you may have to extend the elimination of other common allergic foods such as wheat, milk, eggs, corn, chocolate etc. Some families find an immediate response – no more migraines, bed wetting, asthma, mouth ulcers etc. After a period of time when you start to see acceptable behavior and a good response, you may want to challenge and add some fruit back into the diet.

**Vitamins to help ADHD Children:**

**Zinc**  
**Vitamin C**  
**Calcium**  
**Magnesium**  
**Fish Oils.**

**HELPFUL IDEAS WITH DIET**

- Always try to improve your family's diet. Use mainly whole meal foods, if possible.
- Don't forget the importance of small portions of lean meat 2-3 times a week and your 1-2 fish meals if possible. Avoid fried foods and fatty meats whenever you can.
- For children, never use **artificial sweeteners** e.g. diet drinks used by diabetics. Drink plenty of water, filtered if possible.
- Commercial fruits and vegetables may have been sprayed with toxic chemicals.
- **Wash and peel fruit and vegetables where you can.**
- If your child is going to hospital you can request a salicylate free diet. Offer to assist or take your own foods.
- You may feel embarrassed trying to explain someone when they offer food that your child can't have e.g. the butcher may cut off a cheerio sausage and offer it. Grandma may offer a lolly if they are good etc. Be polite but firm and clear in your reply – NO!
- If you want to make your 11 year old a big healthy lunch because you know they will eat it and remain healthy – do it despite what well meaning friends and neighbors might say to them.

**SELF ESTEEM**

Many ADHD children suffer from low self esteem. Sometimes they are teased at school, or bullied because they find things so much harder to do, or they find it hard to catch a ball on the playground. They start school as happy little children, and through failure, they can even become suicidal. Self esteem is a vital thing to give your child, and confidence that he can do things, and that he doesn't bottle things up inside. A good Mother will work together with her child and give him/her confidence in himself. The following letter was written by an American Clinical Psychologist who visited our city. He works in Florida with ADHD children and their parents. He wrote this paper for parents to read to young children, or for older adolescents with ADHD to read for themselves. In my experience, children need to have an explanation – they know that their motor is running too fast, and it is of enormous comfort to know they are "normal".

## WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE ADHD

By a Clinical Psychologist

Dear

Either your parents or a doctor may have told you recently that you have an Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorders are sometimes called ADD or ADHD for short.

Some children and teenagers understand that this is not a terrible problem and are not upset. If you are one of these children, that's good, but some children feel badly about this information. If you are one of these, children, hopefully this letter will help you feel better. I am a psychologist who talks to a lot of children with ADHD. Usually they feel better after we have talked.

Having ADHD does not mean that you are not smart. Most people with ADHD have good intelligence and are 'gifted'. Secondly, ADHD does not mean that you have an illness or a disease that will hurt your body in some way. Finally ADHD does not mean that you are bad, lazy or don't care about things as much as other children do.

What does it mean if you have ADHD? You probably already know that this problem affects you at home, at school, and with your friends. In all of these situations, you may find it hard to pay attention to things that are not fun and interesting. For example, it may be hard to listen to certain teachers and read lots of pages in a school book. It may be a lot easier to watch TV or play Nintendo.

Since its hard to pay attention sometimes, you may miss 'pieces' of information like school assignments and directions. You may forget some things your teachers and parents ask you to do. You may also have noticed that you can learn something one day and forget it the next day. Also at times, you do or say something without first thinking about it. Sometimes what you have said or done will get you into trouble. All of these things can be very frustrating for you.

Some children with ADHD are also called hyperactive or "hyper". This means that they are more active than other children at times when they are supposed to be still. They may be talking or moving around when they are supposed to be quiet and sitting. In school, children are expected to be quiet and stay in their seats most of the time. If you have ADHD with severe hyperactivity, school might be the hardest, most frustrating place for you.

Before your teachers and parents knew you had ADHD, your behavior probably caused problems for you sometimes. Parents and teachers may have gotten angry with you. They may have blamed you for things you didn't understand, for chores you forgot, or behavior you couldn't stop. You may have been called lazy, irresponsible or bad by adults, friends and even brothers and sisters. Maybe you were even punished a lot. By this time you may have almost given up in school or at home.

Let me try to give you some hope. First, it is very important for you to know that it is not your fault that you have an attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. ADHD is a problem some people are born with. We don't know why. We do know that a part of the brain works differently in people who have ADHD. It is the part of the brain that helps people pay attention, remember and think and act slowly when they want to.

You had no control over what you were born with. You DO have control over how hard you try to do well and be successful by working very hard. ADHD did not stop them from being successful. There is no reason it should stop you, either. What do you have to work harder at? You will have to work harder at paying attention, remembering, being organized, thinking slowly, sitting still and being quiet at certain times.

This is a lot of work. Your parents, teachers and doctor have lots of good ideas about how to do these things better. Don't be afraid to ask for their advice. If you were learning or playing a sport, you'd ask a teacher or coach for advice on how to improve. Pretend your teachers, parents and doctors are your coaches. Learn from them. Practice their ideas and watch yourself do better at all kinds of things.

Don't give up if you slip up. This will happen from time to time. Everyone makes mistakes, and that means you too. I hope that this letter helped you understand a little more about your attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. Remember, you can do as well as you want at anything you want to do.

Good Luck.

### **HOMework AND THE ADHD CHILD.**

Parents can help children who have ADHD with homework. Here's How....

1. Set up a plan of support. Make a regular homework time. Teach your child how to organize notebooks, school supplies, calendars, and assignment sheets. This is an on-going job. Talk to your child's teacher. This will ensure that homework assignments get properly finished and successfully taken back to school. Setting up a reward program at home and school may be helpful.
2. Create a homework friendly environment. Provide a well-lit, study area. He/she should have his or her own homework supplies. Help your child keep supplies organized by labeling shelves and drawers so items get returned to their proper places. Get a drawer organizer for small objects like paper clips, rubber bands, rubbers and stickers. Get one or two extra schoolbooks to keep at home. This avoids the "forgotten book" crisis at home and at school.
3. Avoid doing homework during the times of the day when you and your child are likely to be tired. Late in the day is often a very bad time. Parents are often tired, and have little patience late in the day. Remember that homework time can be VERY stressful for a child with ADHD, who finds it hard to sit still, and concentrate.
4. **Don't let homework ruin your family life.** If homework takes a very long time, or is a bad experience for your children, then visit your child's teacher, and discuss what can be to be by allowing the child to dictate their homework answers to another person. Sometimes classroom teachers will possibly make reasonable accommodations for children when they understand the child's special needs.

### **PARENT TRAINING**

#### **An Essential help in the Treatment of ADHD**

Many parents of ADHD children have discovered that their usual approaches to parenting, that may have worked quite well with non-ADHD siblings, are not effective at all with the ADHD child. Before you begin any intervention, take it all to the Lord in prayer, and ask for His help.

Parents often find themselves feeling increasingly frustrated and helpless in the face of their unsuccessful attempts to manage their child. Feelings of helplessness and frustration may

provoke parents to resort to negative interactions with the child that only seem to make matters worse. Family members become angry and withdrawn from one another as the situation gets out of control. One of the most important treatments for this behavior (because it affects other children in the family too), is parent training. If you can get the services of a counselor, that is good, but if not, reading a book or manual on parenting may be a good start. Do talk to someone who understands, like a friend, or a grandmother. Often they are the best, as they are part of the child and love their grandchildren. It is a good thing to involve your husband/wife, so that you can be in agreement with how to handle the situation. If you are lucky enough to have a counselor, parents can learn ways of coping with their child's behavior, and also improve their relationship with the child.

Have "special time" with your child every day, for parent and child to have proper interactions, to reward the child for good behaviors and to begin to show your child that they can achieve.

It is important that any instructions to your child should be brief, direct and clear, because these children have a short attention span, and working through information can take a little longer. Sometimes the child will have bad behavior (destructive), and parents have to use "time-out". For younger children (3-8 years), this can be very useful. Return the child to the original situation after the 'time-out' is over and give the instruction again, repeating the same thing again, until the child does what he is told. For older children, reasoning may be more helpful. Every child is different, but sometimes the child prefers going to 'time-out' so that it becomes a way of avoiding co-operation with his parents. These children are often bullied at home, and come home and bully their younger siblings, and so it is very hard for both the parents and the younger sibling.

First teach simple skills, and then put in strategies for handling children's behavior outside the home, as new circumstances could arise in the family, or new challenges could arise for the ADHD child and his family.

### TRY.....Catch a kid being good today.

Make up a chart and call it 'CATCH A KID BEING GOOD TODAY'. Look for every bit of good behavior that the child does – e.g. following instructions and doing what they are told, like brushing their teeth, or making their bed. Write it down and compliment the child. Don't worry or mention the things he does wrong. At the end of the day, go into him/her before they go to sleep, and compliment your child on the things he did right today. Sometimes as parents we try so hard to tell a child what they are doing wrong, in order to improve their behavior and show them the right way, that in fact, we are being negative, and this gives the child bad feelings.

When I started to use a chart in this matter, and actually caught MY KID BEING GOOD FOR A DAY – it completely changed his life. I found he relaxed and was eager to do good things and improve his behavior - the results were dramatic. When I went in to say his prayers at night before he went to sleep, we went over the things he did right, and the list grew and grew each day. He gained self esteem, and I stopped picking him up for everything that he found difficult to do e.g. I did not realize that he could not remember more than one instruction at a time, when his younger brother could. Once I started complimenting him for the little things he did get right, he started to improve out of sight. This method works wonderfully

**The ADHD child usually gives different challenges to parents and sometimes a third person is often quite helpful in helping parents to step back from the frustration and negatives.**



## ADHD IN THE UNDER FIVES

### SURVIVAL STRATEGIES

The average child, under the age of three years, is a remarkably uncomplicated little person. Their behavior does not want to hurt anyone else or be aggressive, but they have a great power to stir-up their parents, and don't think too deeply. The frontal lobes of the brain are very immature. This shows in the unthinking behavior of the young, which improves as they become closer to school age.

In ADHD children, the frontal areas of the brain fail to work smoothly and they show unwise behavior. The average preschool child has plenty of active, unthinking behavior, but when ADHD is present, this produces a double dose of not proper awareness to people and the world around them. Though most of the children with ADHD are first noticed in their pre-school years, the problems don't start to mount up until they hit the demands of school. During early childhood, some of the children were irritable, movement-loving (my son used to rock backwards and forwards, even in his cot and then his bed), and some of these little ones cry a lot. Others demand constant carrying, entertainment and attention. Many of these children are said to be very 'busy' and into everything as soon as they start walking.

Most of these children were very lively and restless in their second year. At age three, they suffer low frustration, lack of common sense, demanding, generally dissatisfied, busy, noisy and getting into unthinking attacks on other children. The 3 problems that causes most pain to parents are

- (1) Short fuse
- (2) Lack of frustration control. Lots of demands.
- (3) Dissatisfaction and unthinking attacks on other children.

### THE PARENTS

Parents of extremely difficult young children become bewildered. They can't understand why the behavior techniques that work so well for their friends and other siblings are so ineffective with their children.

They feel criticized by onlookers, friends and family. There seem no easy answers and they wonder what happened to the joy of parenting.

**With a difficult ADHD child of any age, parents seem to adopt one of three approaches.**

- (1) They accept this temperamental child, making allowances, relax and parent from the heart.
- (2) They become overwhelmed, feel failures and lose direction.
- (3) They try to drive the bad behavior out of the child, and force them to comply.

Most parents at some time, try the third, firm approach, but fortunately back off when it is seen to fail. Some get stuck in the middle ground, being overwhelmed and unable to move ahead. It seems that those who are successful in managing ADHD best, eventually find the first approach best, accept, and nurture and parent from the heart. This is what happened to me.

## AS A RULE

The best chance of success comes from anticipating problems before they hit, steering around the unimportant, clear communication, diversion, time out, getting outside, putting on a favorite video, avoiding escalation and keeping young children moving.

The ways we make things worse are generally criticizing, escalating, addressing the unimportant, confronting, debating, shouting, smacking, withholding privileges and over-use of the word 'no'. Parents who do not accept the ADHD child as different, and make no special allowances, are in for trouble. Those who are hell-bent on bringing up their children with the same rigid discipline of their parent's generation are also heading for failure. Parents who live with a demanding difficult young child feel trapped and have no space.

## SURVIVAL STRATEGY.

It's not fair, it shouldn't happen, but the child is there and no one is going to miraculously change their temperament. Over the years we have found that clever behavior programs don't work.

The first step is to accept the reality of the situation, then become committed to the few firm rules, then steer around the strife. If lengthy time in the supermarket is a nightmare, avoid this, use late night shopping or bundle the child in the trolley and use a fairly quick approach. If gatherings with friends and family cause embarrassment, drop in for a high quality half-hour and leave before the bomb blows. If travel is difficult, stay near home. If the child is a runner, strengthen the compound. If ornaments get broken, lock them away. If the video is being reprogrammed, put it in a playpen.

It's not the way it should be, but it is easier to spend time playing with the child than getting nothing done as you squabble and resent. They enjoy getting out, but don't let two hours of fun in the park be destroyed by an argument on the way home. We are not looking for conflict; our aim is peaceful living with a child who is still close to their parents at the age of eighteen. The general rule for all our ADHD children is **when in doubt; use an olive branch not a stick**. The end result will be that children who present with extreme ADHD behavior at preschool age will probably continue to be a challenge for many years. If we don't get it right at the start, relationships can become permanently derailed.

## ADHD – A TEENAGER'S GUIDE.

Many ADHD teens get tired of hearing "you're just lazy", "I know you can do better", or "if you would only pay attention in class and do your homework, your grades would be much better". If you are a teenager and reading this, ADHD is thought to be a brain disorder that makes it difficult to sit still and pay attention.

Three types of symptoms generally occur in ADHD with teens. You may have only one or all three.

(1) The first is **hyperactivity**. This means that you may always be in motion, tapping your foot or your pencil. Or you may talk too much, and people may call you "motor mouth!" You hate having to sit still, which causes problems at school. In teenagers and adults, hyperactivity often takes the form of a feeling of restlessness.

(2) The second symptom is **inattentiveness**. This means you have trouble paying attention for long periods of time. You are easily distracted and daydream a lot, which causes problems at school. You make careless mistakes. Forgetting assignments is common. Reading may be very difficult.

Your eyes may get tired, or may not track from one line to another properly. You may get bored easily. Getting yourself organized is likely to be a problem and you may always be losing or misplacing assignments, notes, your keys etc. For girls, daydreaming a lot, emotional problems, eating disorders, disorganization and not being able to focus are often the symptoms present.

(3) **Impulsivity** is the third symptom. People who are impulsive often do not think before they act. You may skip classes, put off doing homework, or even break the law without thinking about the consequences. You may interrupt others or blurt things out and then wish that you had not said them, because they get you in trouble or hurt someone's feelings. You may also be accident-prone. In many ways, ADHD is not so much a deficit in attention, as it is an inability to pay attention consistently over a period of time. Some people with ADHD over focus, meaning that they become so engrossed in what they are doing, they completely tune out everything else. They are often easily led.

While no one knows what causes ADHD, it does seem to run in families, which suggests that it may be inherited. There appears to be more boys than girls have ADHD compared to girls. There are many around the world, doing research and trying to find the answers.

People with ADHD are at a greater risk for school failure, for having other learning disabilities, and for abusing drugs or alcohol. You may have more trouble making friends, and getting along with your family. You might be grumpier and have a quick temper. Left untreated, you may have trouble at school or in a job. If you have had these problems for a number of years, you may suffer from low self-esteem.

Reading everything you can on this subject is a big help, or having a counselor. If you cant do this, try talking to a friend about your difficulties and reading as much as you can, and thoroughly investigating your diet. It could be that you are eating things that you are highly allergic too, and this could completely change your life.

### **HOW CAN YOU IMPROVE YOUR SCHOOL PERFORMANCE.**

(1) You cannot afford to just get by in school if you have ADHD. Tell your Teachers you have this difficulty. If you explain that you have a problem and ask for their help, teachers will be much more likely to work with you. Do so at the beginning of the year, not after problems start.

(2) **Use an assignment notebook.** This is essential. You cannot rely on your memory to keep track of all of your assignments. Put all your homework assignments in it, as well as upcoming tests. Check the book daily and check off your assignments as you complete them.

(3) **Use a homework folder.** Label one side "Work to be Done", and put all assignment sheets there. Label the other side "Completed Work to be turned In", and put all finished assignments there as soon as you finish them. Check this folder every day.

(4) **Use your Backpack as an organizer.** Keep pens and pencils in outside pockets, your assignment notebook in another pocket and your homework folder and books inside. When you

finish assignments, put them immediately into your bag to avoid losing them or forgetting them the next morning.

(5) **Sit at the front of the class, near the Teacher.** It will make it much easier for you to pay attention and not get distracted. Don't worry what others will think. Just explain to them that it makes it easier for you to pay attention.

(6) **Take notes even if you think you know the material.** This makes it easier to keep focused.

(7) **If you have a hard time paying attention to the teacher,** ask if you can tape record the lectures. You can listen to the tapes later, to help you fill in the gaps that you missed.

### **What can you do to cope better with your day-to day life?**

It may seem like a burden having ADHD, and in some ways it is. You may wish that it would just go away. This is understandable. By following some simple strategies, you can make your life much easier. Again, try different ones and see what works for you.

- Tell friends you have ADHD.
- Take time to let off steam.
- Make lists of things to do.
- Learn to express your feelings more appropriately.

Most people do not outgrow ADHD. However, people do learn to adapt and lead successful lives. Remember also that having ADHD is not all bad. Many people with ADHD tend to be energetic, outgoing and creative. They become successful in business, sales, sports and other careers.

### **ADULT ADHD**

Some or all of the following may be present some or all of the time.

- Sense of underachievement.
- Easily bored, craves stimulation, takes risks, gambles.
- Fidgets, doodles, seem to be elsewhere, easily distracted or sidetracked.
- Mood swings, extremes of feelings, sense of impending doom, excessive or unfounded anxiety or sensitivity; compulsive.
- Over-excited, hyper focused, obsessive.
- Intolerance, can act with sudden, unreasonable and/or unpredictable verbal and/or physical aggression; rages.
- Reluctance to read, finds it hard to focus and concentrate.
- Reluctance to write, finds it hard to express and sequence ideas, may be dyslexic.
- Sets unreasonable goals and multi-tasks leading to non-completion of projects.
- Difficulty getting organized.
- Subject hops and many thoughts in mind at once.
- Impatient, tactless, interrupts or acts out
- Finishes off other's sentences.
- Impulsive with no thought of consequences.
- Has trouble following authorized procedure, oppositional.
- Inattentive forgetful, can't retain information, sudden blank mind.

## **THE PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS.**

### **Greater than ‘normal’ frequency of:**

- Cravings, addictions e.g. cigarettes, alcohol, sugar, caffeine, milk, chocolate, soft drinks, chemicals, drugs.
- Allergies, hypersensitivity, asthma, eczema, hay fever, rashes, hives, mouth ulcers, itching.
- Migraines, headaches, dizziness.
- Excessive thirst.
- Eye troubles, e.g. dark circles, conjunctivitis.
- Digestive upsets etc. bloating, abdominal pains, heartburn, and abnormal appetite.
- Muscle aches, twitching, tics, cramps, fatigue, restlessness.
- Air hunger, eg sighing, yawning.
- Sleep disturbances.
- Excessive perspiration.
- Skin, nail, hair abnormalities (lack of Zinc).
- Poor temperature sense.
- Thyroid problems.

## **WEBSITES OF INTEREST**

Sue Dengate, Australia: [www.fedupwitfoodadditives.info](http://www.fedupwitfoodadditives.info)

New Zealand ADHD Association: [www.adhd.co.nz](http://www.adhd.co.nz)

Hyperactive Children’s Support Group, England: [www.hacsg.org.uk](http://www.hacsg.org.uk)

Carelinks Christadelphian Ministries: [www.carelinks.net](http://www.carelinks.net)

From a Mother who’s been there: [helen.pyper@clear.net.nz](mailto:helen.pyper@clear.net.nz)

## **FINAL ENCOURAGEMENT**

ADHD people are often creative, intuitive and highly intelligent.

Famous people with this problem have been Albert Einstein and Winston Churchill, and a whole host of others. It is treatable, and as loving parents, we just have to find ways to bring out the best in our sons and our daughters, and grandchildren. Don’t be afraid to ask for help. God knows all about it, and above all, we can use the wonderful medium of prayerfulness. I have experienced miracles in my life through prayer with my son, and He is not finished with him yet. Don’t forget to thank God, when you start to see miracles! He brought people into my life, which I never dreamed of. Let’s look forward to the Kingdom, when these things will pass away, and only peace and happiness will be the order of the day.