

The Guide to ADHD in Adults

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אנשי
הקשב

What's in the guide?

The 10 most important facts about ADHD

What exactly is ADHD?

Is ADHD genetic?

Does everyone have ADHD?

What does ADHD look like in adult life?

How is ADHD diagnosed?

Why get diagnosed as an adult?

Which treatments are really recommended?

What happens when you understand?



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The 10 most important facts about ADHD!

1 ADHD is neurological

Or in other words: developmental, biological, genetic, rooted in the brain, and present from birth.

2 Not everyone has it

Large studies over the years show that the rate of ADHD is not changing and stays at 5% to 10%. Awareness is rising and more people seek a diagnosis, which creates the illusion that it is everywhere.

3 It's not just for kids

It continues into adulthood. The hyperactive side usually fades or is better controlled, but the inattention is alive and kicking in every area of life, so it is important to diagnose and treat it.

4 It affects every area of life

Studies, relationships, parenting, work. It can also lead to eating disorders, sleep disorders, depression, anxiety and more.

5 It's not on purpose

People forget, put things off, run late, don't pay attention and are messy. It is simply hard for them to get organized and manage their time. Here too the cause is genetic: the front part of the brain, which is in charge of sensing time and getting organized, is less developed.

Diagnosed by a specialist doctor

6

The doctor makes a clinical diagnosis, checking that the symptoms appeared in childhood, that they affect more than one area of life, and that no other diagnosis can explain them.

Ritalin is not a narcotic

7

It simply prevents the rapid reuptake of dopamine and keeps it in the brain longer, as in a person without ADHD. When taken as prescribed by a doctor, the risk of addiction is low. In any case, the diagnosis does not depend on taking medication, and that choice is entirely up to the patient.



It can be treated

8

With medication, emotional or behavioral therapy, or learning strategies, whatever suits each person. Every difficulty can be treated and its impact reduced. Treatment works wonders for people with ADHD. Ignoring the difficulties makes them worse.

It has wonderful sides

9

Scientific and clinical studies have found that people with ADHD are more creative, original, brave, fun, sensitive and empathetic. To see these sides, it is important to treat it.

Empathy, acceptance, compassion

10

It is important to develop these toward the person with ADHD and toward the people around them, who cope with the difficulties indirectly. Support groups are recommended, so the atmosphere at home stays good and relationships grow stronger.

What exactly is ADHD?

A neurodevelopmental disorder, meaning it is rooted in the brain and present from birth, and it stays with a person for life. As the name says, it causes attention difficulties. In other words:

- **Not paying attention**
- **Missing or tuning out information**
- **High distractibility**

Counted 5 or more?

In the DSM diagnostic manual, this is the number from which a diagnosis is considered. It is not a diagnosis yet, but it is enough to get checked.

Ask me on WhatsApp



The 9 symptoms of inattention
At least 5 must be present:

This is the threshold for adults, from age 17.
Up to age 16, the threshold is 6 symptoms.

Avoiding mental effort
Anything that needs attention: reading long documents, filling out forms, doing tasks.

Short attention span
Within five minutes the mind starts to wander and drift.

Distractibility
By every little thing, from outside (a cat!) or from inside (a thought).

Forgetfulness
Small details, messages, meetings, payments, names.

Tendency to lose things
and to put them in the wrong places.

Trouble with order and organization
at home, on the desk, in the calendar.

Procrastination and avoidance
Everything gets pushed to the last minute, “later.”

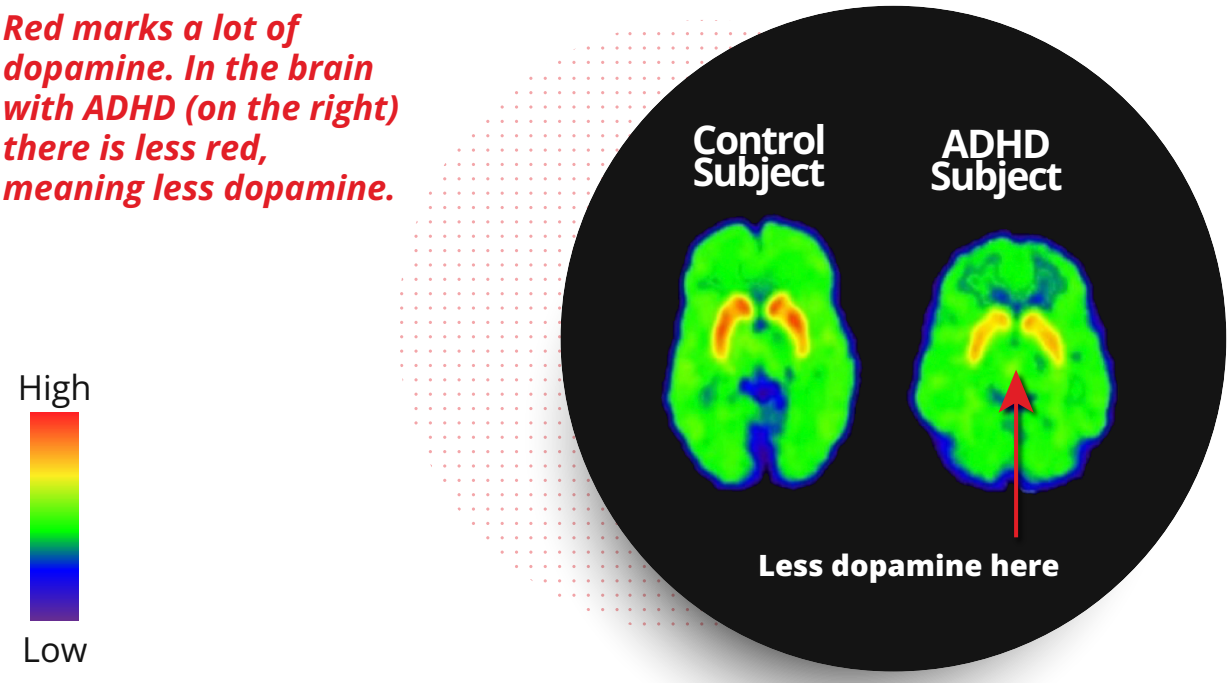
Careless mistakes
Not reading an email to the end, mixing up details.

Difficulty finishing tasks
Starting a lot, then moving on to the next thing before finishing.

Is ADHD genetic?

Yes. There is clear evidence of a different brain structure and of impaired function of neurotransmitters (dopamine) in the brain. Dopamine is responsible for attention and concentration, and for other areas such as memory, executive functions, sensory regulation and mood.

Red marks a lot of dopamine. In the brain with ADHD (on the right) there is less red, meaning less dopamine.



Does everyone have ADHD?

The worldwide rate of ADHD has been fairly stable over the years, at only 5% to 10%. “Everyone” may have what are called “attention difficulties,” which can be caused by stress, overload, screens or distractions.

But the critical difference is that ADHD is rooted in the brain and present from birth: signs appear from a young age, over the years, and in more than one area of life. The difficulty is also significant, disrupts daily life, and is not caused by another disorder (such as anxiety or depression).

In childhood, more boys are diagnosed, but this seems to be because the symptoms are missed in girls. That is why many women are diagnosed only as adults.

What does ADHD look like in adult life?

The severity of the traits depends a great deal on awareness and treatment. The signs show up in several areas of life, more than one but not necessarily all.



Sleep

75% of people with ADHD have sleep difficulties, which can show up in falling asleep, waking up, staying asleep and sleep quality.



Work

More job changes, dismissals and unemployment, difficulty keeping a steady job, and friction with managers and people in authority.



Higher education

80% of people with ADHD do not have an academic degree. 50% drop out after the first year of studies.



Relationships

Difficulty keeping a stable relationship, and twice the risk of divorce.



Nutrition

A tendency to choose less healthy food, twice the risk of obesity and four times the risk of eating disorders. Eating habits are also less regular and more impulsive.



Health

A higher risk of asthma, allergies, diabetes, high blood pressure, psoriasis, and immune and metabolic disorders, as well as addictions and risky behaviors.

How is ADHD diagnosed?

- **A clinical interview with a specialist doctor, about 45 minutes**
  Checking whether the DSM diagnostic criteria are met, using validated questionnaires.
- **Questions about distractibility and impulsivity**
  When the difficulties began, and how they showed up at younger ages.
- **Where the difficulties are felt**
  At home, in studies, at work, and whether they could have another source, such as stress or depression.
- **Alongside this, a computerized test**
  Our diagnosis uses an international computerized test called Mindstreams. The test alone does not diagnose, and does not show whether ADHD is present or absent. Only interpreting and combining all the findings leads to an accurate diagnosis.

Why get diagnosed as an adult?

ADHD has a particular impact on adult life, when you are expected to be independent and there are no parents to keep you going.

- **Because a diagnosis brings order to your mind**
  Without a diagnosis, ADHD can lead to low self-esteem, a sense of failure and helplessness, avoidance, stress, anxiety and depression. An accurate diagnosis explains all of this.
- **Because it affects everyone around you**
  Partners feel neglected: “He doesn’t listen to me,” “Why does she keep forgetting?” The person with ADHD tells themselves “I’m not important enough.” A diagnosis helps end this story.
- **Because it can be treated**
  Managers angry about late work, a messy home, struggling to keep up with raising the kids. All of these can be worked on once you know the source.

Which treatments are really recommended?

Before anything else, it is important to process the findings emotionally. Sometimes feelings of relief and hope come up, and sometimes shame, confusion, anger and frustration over lost time and missed opportunities. These feelings make sense, and it is important to address them.

- **Medication**
  Found to help 85% of children with ADHD, and it works for adults too. It is effective and targeted, and lowers the risks linked to ADHD, such as depression, anxiety, injuries, substance use, academic failure and obesity. When taken as prescribed by a doctor, the risk of addiction is low. It is important to stay under a doctor's care to find the right type and dose, with as few side effects as possible.

- **Cognitive behavioral therapy**
  Found to be the most effective after medication, and alongside it. It works on executive functions and teaches everyday coping strategies.

- **Emotional therapy**
  When there are emotional symptoms alongside the ADHD, such as low self-esteem, insecurity, social difficulties, depression or anxiety.

- **Exercise and meditation**
  Found to be calming and to improve attention symptoms.

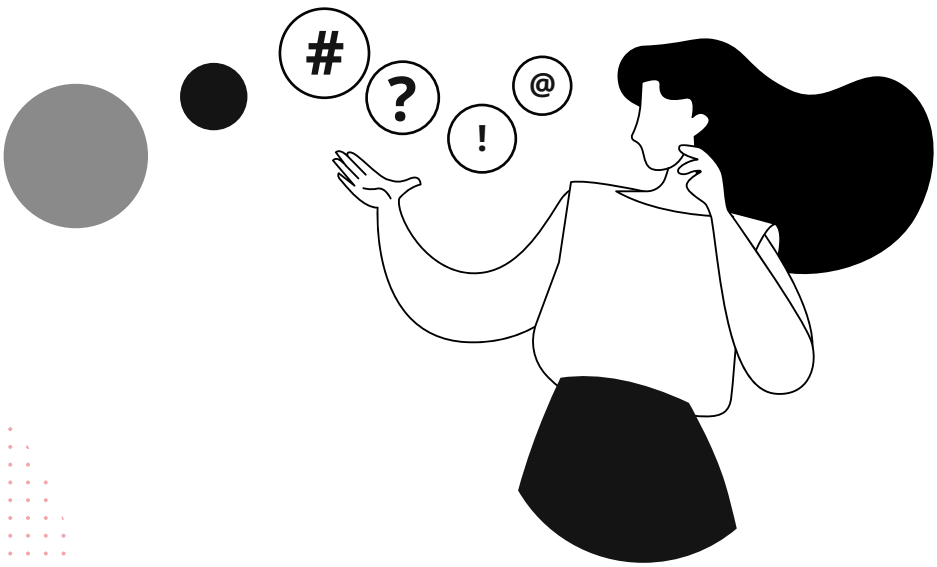
To date, no "natural remedy" has been proven to help significantly, or to replace the treatments described here.

What happens when you understand?

"I'm 47, and I've done fine. But I have endless ideas that I always, and I mean always, fail to carry through to the end. After the diagnosis, everything, and I mean everything, is new... All the existential fears that kept me from doing things in my business and my personal life are gone. Everything has come down to a place I can control."
Michal, adult diagnosis

"We are now 4 months after the diagnosis with you and with Dr. Gabi Weinstein, and after finding the medication dose that suits me, I feel the improvement in every aspect, from functioning at work to studies, social connections and my relationship."
Itamar, adult diagnosis

"Before the course I was skeptical that it could make a real change in my life. After the course, once I learned to apply what I had learned, I felt wonderful. A lot of tension and uncertainty lifted off me, and I felt that I was managing my time, and not the other way around!"
Omri, time management course





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For more info, click here

Runs the "Anshei HaKashev" Facebook community

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The next step

A diagnosis explains, at any age

Two thorough sessions, with a diagnostician and with a neurologist, a computerized test, a full report with recommendations, and three months of medical support to adjust the treatment. All online, from home.

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Time management course

(in Hebrew)

Details about the diagnosis

The quiet WhatsApp group

(in Hebrew)