

New Braunfels Pediatric Associates, P.A.

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To the Parent/Guardian of: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Thank you for choosing New Braunfels Pediatrics to evaluate your child for ADHD or Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder. Please complete all paperwork and return to our office with your appointment. The forms must be complete or the visit may have to be rescheduled. Please arrive at our office 15 minutes before your appointment to allow staff time to review these forms.

There are steps that need to be taken to make a diagnosis of ADHD. Some children may have a learning disability, some children may have difficulty with their hearing or vision, and some children may actually have ADHD. The answers come from the parents, other family members, teachers, doctors and other professionals working as a team. Here are the steps that the team needs to take to evaluate your child.

- Step 1. Read the Attention Deficit Disorder information sheet.
- Step 2. Parents/Guardian fill out the Vanderbilt Assessment scale – parent informant.
- Step 3. Parents/Guardian fill out the Controlled Substance prescription refill guideline.
- Step 4. Have primary teacher and or instructors (these can be school teachers, karate instructors, scout leaders, etc.) fill out the DePaul ADHD rating scale. There can be more than one teacher completing the scale. This step can be omitted in the summer.
- Step 5. Return all paperwork to New Braunfels Pediatrics with your appointment.

Because of the complexity of ADHD, we block extra time for the initial evaluation. Please be on time, and call in advance if you cannot make the appointment time as it will need to be rescheduled. Our doctors base their diagnosis and treatment plan on all information received so it is important to return all paperwork, including teacher evaluations, as soon as possible.

Thank you for your time and patience.

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ATTENTION DEFICIT DISORDER (SHORT ATTENTION SPAN)

DEFINITION

Attention deficit disorder (ADD) occurs in 3% to 5% of children, most of them boys. A normal attention span is 3 to 5 minutes per year of a child's age. A child in kindergarten needs a 15-minute attention span. First and second graders need a 20-minute span to do the work. (*Note:* The attention span while watching television doesn't count.) If you suspect that your child has a short attention span, ask another adult (a teacher or day care provider, for example) if she has observed this also. The following characteristics are common:

- A child hasn't learned to listen when someone talks, wait his turn, complete a task, or return to a task if interrupted. (*Caution:* These can be normal characteristics of children less than 3 or 4 years old.)
- Some children (80% of boys and 50% of girls) also have associated hyperactivity (increased motor activity) with symptoms of being restless, impulsive, and in a hurry. This is called attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, or ADHD.
- Some children (50%) also have an associated learning disability. The most common one is an auditory processing deficit (i.e., they have difficulty remembering complex verbal directions). However, the intelligence of most children with ADD is usually normal.

Similar Conditions

Disruptive children, children who don't mind, and aggressive children are sometimes included under the broad category of hyperactivity. These children should be looked on as children with behavior problems and approached with appropriate discipline techniques.

Causes

ADD is the most common developmental disability. "Developmental" means that the disability is caused by delayed brain development (immaturity). This delay results in poor self-control, requiring external controls by the parents for a longer period of time. Often this type of temperament and short attention span are hereditary. Minor brain damage has not been proven to cause ADD.

Expected Course

Children with developmental ADD can improve significantly if parents and teachers provide understanding and direction and preserve the children's self-esteem. When these children become adults, many of them have good attention spans but remain restless, have to keep busy, and, in a sense, have not entirely outgrown the problem. However, not only does society learn to tolerate such traits in adults, but in some settings the person with endless energy is prized.

GUIDELINES FOR LIVING WITH A CHILD HAVING A SHORT ATTENTION SPAN AND HYPERACTIVITY

ADD is a chronic condition that needs special parenting and school intervention. If your child seems to have a poor attention span and is over 3 years of age, these recommendations may assist you. Your main obligations involve organizing your child's home life and improving discipline. Only after your child's behavior has improved will you know for certain if your child also has ADD. If he does, specific interventions to help him learn to listen and complete tasks ("stretch" his attention span) can be initiated. Even though you can't be sure about ADD until your child is 3 or 4 years of age, you can detect and improve behavior problems after 8 months of age.

1. **Accept your child's limitations.** Accept the fact that your child is intrinsically active and energetic and possibly always will be. The hyperactivity is not intentional. Don't expect to eliminate the hyperactivity but merely to bring it under reasonable control. Any criticism or other attempt to change an energetic child into a quiet or model child will cause more harm than good. Nothing helps a hyperactive child more than having a tolerant, patient, low-keyed parent.
2. **Provide an outlet for the release of excess energy.** This energy can't be bottled up and stored. Daily outdoor activities such as running, sports, and long walks are good outlets. A fenced yard helps. In bad weather your child needs a recreational area where he can play as he pleases with minimal restrictions and supervision. A garage will suffice. Too many toys can cause him to be more easily distracted from playing with any one toy. The toys should be safe and relatively unbreakable. Encourage your child to play with one toy at a time.
3. **Keep your home well organized.** Household routines help the hyperactive child to accept order. Keep the times for wake-up, meals, chores, naps, and bed regular. Keep your environment relatively quiet to encourage thinking, listening, and reading at home. In general, leave the radio and television off. Predictable daily events help your child's responses become more predictable. ADD symptoms are made worse by sleep deprivation and hunger. Be sure your child has an early bedtime and a big breakfast on school days.
4. **Try not to let your child become fatigued.** When a hyperactive child becomes exhausted, his self-control often breaks down and the hyperactivity becomes worse. Try to have your child sleep or rest when he is fatigued. If he can't seem to "turn off his motor," hold and rock him in a rocking chair.
5. **Avoid taking your child to formal gatherings.** Except for special occasions, avoid places where