

## FACTSHEET

### Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) in Children

ADHD is one of the most common psychological disorders diagnosed in children. It affects 5% to 10% of school-aged children. In some cases, ADHD can be mild. In other cases, however, it may lead to problems at school, at work or with friends and family. An assessment and proper treatment may be relevant in the latter cases.

#### THE SYMPTOMS OF ADHD

- Difficulty concentrating or focusing
- Restlessness, fidgeting and squirming
- Impulsivity
- Disorganization
- Forgetfulness
- Talking excessively
- Difficulty waiting one's turn
- Difficulty completing tasks
- Avoiding tasks that require a prolonged mental effort
- Tendency to lose or accidentally break personal belongings
- Decreased ability to tolerate frustration
- Mood swings
- Difficulties in relationships

#### THE ADHD EVALUATION

- ADHD is a behavioral diagnosis: it cannot be diagnosed using blood or other physical tests.
- A proper evaluation includes: an interview with the child, interviews with parents or teachers, testing and behavioral observations of the child, and a report with recommendations.

#### TREATMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

- Effective treatment can involve therapies to work on behaviour, medication for more difficult cases, or a combination of both.
- Behavioural strategies tailored to the needs of the child will help them compensate for their difficulties.
- Parental coaching helps with challenging daily tasks such as the morning and bedtime routines as well as with homework.
- Medication may help decrease severe ADHD symptoms. When symptoms are manageable, children can work on coping and behavioural strategies.

Without treatment, children are more likely to develop depression, anxiety and oppositional disorder. Problems paying attention and getting easily distracted may persist into adulthood, which can cause problems with work and relationships. Individuals with ADHD have also been shown to be more likely to be unemployed, have accidents, drink alcohol, take drugs and smoke. Girls with ADHD are more likely to have teenage pregnancies. This is thought to be related to impulsivity. Many forms of intervention exist, but the