

A photograph of three young people outdoors. In the center, a young woman with blonde hair is smiling and looking towards the right. To her left, a young man with brown hair is wearing a camouflage jacket. To her right, a young woman with red hair is wearing a black and white plaid jacket. The woman on the bicycle is wearing a black jacket with a fur-lined hood and black boots. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with a building and trees. A large, semi-transparent pink graphic consisting of several vertical bars of varying heights and shades of pink is overlaid on the center of the image.

ABOUT ADHD

ADHD NORGE

ADHD

ADHD stands for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. ADHD is a neurological developmental disorder characterised by pronounced concentration problems, anxiety, restlessness and impulsivity. ADHD is a condition, not a disease.

Causes of ADHD

Genetics play a significant role in the development of ADHD. Studies show that complications during pregnancy and birth may increase the risk of developing ADHD, and that genetic and environmental factors both play a role.

ADHD can be divided into three subtypes:

- ADHD predominantly hyperactive-impulsive type
- ADHD combined type (i.e. inattention, impulsivity and hyperactivity)
- ADHD predominantly inattentive type (previously called Attention Deficit Disorder – ADD)

Hyperactivity:

- Difficulty sitting still
- Fidgeting with hands and feet
- Restlessness and inner turmoil/anxiety

Impulsivity:

- Difficulty waiting their turn
- Often interrupt or interfere
- Act without thinking
- Impulsivity in adults can make it difficult to manage money or perform normal work

Inattentiveness:

- Difficulty in completing and organising tasks
- Frequently switch from one activity to another
- Difficulty in following instructions
- Distracted easily

ADHD assessments are conducted by the specialised mental health services. For a diagnosis to be made, the symptoms must have been present for at least six months. Symptoms should have presented before the age of 12, cause substantial problems, and manifest in various situations. Any associated disorders should also be evaluated.

Most people who are diagnosed with ADHD have ADHD combined type. That is, they have significant difficulties with hyperactivity, impulsivity and inattention.

How common is ADHD?

Studies show that 3–5 % of children and adolescents under 18 have ADHD. More boys are diagnosed with ADHD than girls, at a ratio of 4:1. Approximately half of those diagnosed as children have ADHD into adulthood. ADHD is prevalent in approximately 2-3 % of the adult population, with little difference between the genders.

Difficulties may be diverse, with varied degrees of severity. At preschool age, high levels of activity and impulsivity are exhibited, which can lead to challenges and difficulties when playing with others. From school age, problems with concentration also become apparent, which lead to difficulties in time keeping and completing tasks. Among adolescents and adults, concentration problems and impulsivity are frequently the most prominent symptoms. Hyperactivity begins to abate somewhat at the onset of puberty.

Which associated disorders are most common?

Around 2 out of 3 people with ADHD suffer from at least one associated disorder.

The most common include:

- Oppositional defiant disorder and conduct disorder
- Learning difficulties
- Motor difficulties
- Speech and language delay
- Tourette syndrome (motor tics)
- Anxiety disorders
- Mood disorders (depression)
- Sleep disorders

What can be done?

Thorough evaluation and accurate diagnostic procedures are fundamental to tailoring treatments and measures when receiving a diagnosis of ADHD. These include:

- Information on ADHD
- Adapting teaching and/or work methods
- Information and guidance to those with ADHD as well as their families/relatives
- Medicinal treatment
- Support and assistance

Where can I get help?

For children and adolescents:

An ADHD assessment is often initiated together with the parents, family doctor, the school, a public health nurse and PPT (Municipal Educational Psychological Services)

For a diagnosis to be made, you must be referred to specialised mental health services – usually BUP (Child and Adolescent Psychiatry).

If you are over 18:

ADHD assessment is conducted in consultation with District Psychiatric Centres (DPS) after referral by a doctor.

ADHD Norway

ADHD Norway is a nationwide, voluntary organisation for people with ADHD and their relatives.

ADHD Norway's vision is that everyone with ADHD should have the opportunity to make use of their resources and enjoy a good quality of life.