The National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) says that “Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is one of the most common childhood disorders. It often begins when the child is about 7 years old and can continue through adolescence and adulthood. It affects 9 percent of American children age 13-18.”

**DIAGNOSIS & TREATMENT GUIDELINES FOR CONSUMERS AND FAMILIES**

In order to be diagnosed with ADHD, your child must have six or more of these symptoms for at least six months.

- Acts without thinking
- Runs around a lot
- Is easily distracted
- Seems not to listen
- Can’t fall asleep easily
- May be forgetful
- Fails to follow through on parents’/teachers’ requests
- Has difficulty getting along with others
- Isn’t able to complete school work
- Has a hard time following rules
- Has problems sitting still
- Does poorly in school

You may seek help for your child because you, your child’s doctor, teacher, or school counselor may see certain behaviors that need to be addressed. The next step is an examination of your child. The doctor may ask some questions about your child’s behaviors and how well your child is able to pay attention. You and your child’s teacher may be asked to keep a daily log of your child’s behaviors and reactions to situations. Your child’s doctor will examine your child, review the daily log, and suggest treatment options. These options may include medication.

The next step is to identify a treatment team that will include you, your child and your doctor. In some cases, it may also include a case manager, a therapist, or counselors. When the team is identified, a treatment plan is put together. A treatment plan may include:

- Learning about ADHD and how to cope with it
- Treatment for your child and the family, instruction in anger management, training in social skills, and the name and dosage of medication
- Having your family, a special friend, or school counselor help you and your child
- Support for you and the rest of your family

Learn more at: beaconhealthoptions.com
Your child’s treatment plan is designed to help your child and your entire family. If the goals are not met and behaviors are increasing, it is important to let the treatment team know so that changes can be made immediately.

The treatment plan includes regular office visits with the therapist and doctor. This is to see how well your child and family are doing with the current plan. They will want to know how your child has been acting and how the medication is working. Treatment is an ongoing process that may include changes in the plan.

Even if everything is stable, it is important to check in with the team. It is very important to keep the regular office visits to ensure that treatment is working.

Taking medicine is not always easy. There are times children may not want to take the medication, and there are two main reasons for why this occurs. The first reason is that the medication can be upsetting their stomach, producing headaches, affecting their sleep, or causing them to lose their appetite. It is very important to tell your doctor about these symptoms. Your doctor may want to add another medication, change the dosage, or change the medication. It is very important for you to tell your doctor if your child uses any of the following: over-the-counter (non-prescription) drugs, prescription drugs, street drugs, or alcohol. Some drugs do not mix well with others and may cause dangerous side effects. The second reason children may not want to take medications is the stigma associated with them and the things people or their friends may say. If this should happen, it is important to talk to your child with the therapist and doctor.

If you or your child have any questions or concerns about the medicine, talk to your doctor immediately.

What is “informed consent?” Informed consent occurs when the doctor reviews the following with you and your child:

» Your child’s medicine

» How and why your child should use it

» The medication’s side effects

» Other kinds of treatment that you may want to try

After you have talked about all these points with the doctor, you may be asked to sign an “Informed Consent.” Signing this means that you understand and agree with what your doctor is asking of you and your child. There are times when the doctor may ask for your verbal consent. When this occurs, the doctor will make a notation in the medical record that you gave informed consent.

It is your right not to sign this paper or give verbal consent. If you do give consent, you have the right to take back your consent at any time.

RESOURCES

National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH)
www.nih.gov
6001 Executive Boulevard, Room 6200, MSC 9663
Bethesda, MD 20892-9663
Phone (866) 615-6464 | Fax: (301) 443-4279

Children and Adults with Attention Deficit Disorder (CH.A.D.D)
www.chadd.org
8181 Professional Place, Suite 150
Landover, MD 20785
Phone (800) 233-4050 | Fax: (301) 306-7090

Attention Deficit Disorder Association (ADDA)
www.add.org
ADDA P.O. Box 543
Pottstown, PA 19464
Phone: (484) 945-2101 | Fax: (610) 970-7520

If you would like more information, or if you have questions, please talk with your doctor or call your Beacon Health Options member services representative.

These materials are presented as an educational resource and as helpful information to you. These materials are in no way meant to represent medical or clinical advice, recommendations, or therapy. If you have any issues regarding your medical or mental health condition and need advice, please consult your provider/doctor.