

WHAT IS ADHD?



An Information Booklet for Children with ADHD

WHAT IS ADHD?

ADHD stands for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. It is sometimes called ADD, which stands for Attention Deficit Disorder. They are the same thing but ADHD is the official name. ADHD is something that kids, teens or adults can have.



HOW DID I GET ADHD?

No one is sure why anyone has ADHD but scientists and doctors think that it probably has to do with different levels of brain activity.



WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU HAVE ADHD?

When you have ADHD, your behaviour can be different from your friends' or siblings' behaviour. You may forget to do things or have to be constantly reminded to do things.

Sometimes you may have a hard time paying attention, especially when something is boring or if there are too many details to remember. This is called **Inattention**.



Sometimes you may feel kind of hyper and have extra energy. This is called **Hyperactivity**. This could mean that you might have a hard time sitting still for long periods of time or you might get bored if you have to sit in one place for long.



A person with ADHD sometimes doesn't stop to think before doing something. This is called being **Impulsive**. This could include blurting out answers to questions before the question is even finished or actions that are dangerous, like not waiting for the light to change before crossing the street.



ADHD AND SCHOOL

If you have ADHD, you might have problems at school. That is not because you aren't smart but maybe you are having trouble paying attention to the teacher. Or maybe you are having problems staying on track while doing schoolwork or sometimes you lose or forget your homework. It's not a big deal to have ADHD, but it is important to get the help you need. Kids with ADHD are just as smart as any other kids.



THINGS TO DO AT SCHOOL

Here are some tips that might make it easier for you to function better at school:

- ✓ Sit near the teacher and the blackboard to help you pay attention better.
- ✓ Sit by kids who do their work and don't fool around often or talk too much.
- ✓ Use a notebook and write down **EVERY** assignment right away when the teacher gives it. Don't wait until later or at the end of class, or you might forget!
- ✓ If you feel really hyper in class, ask your parents to talk to the teacher about letting you move around a little. That could include getting a drink of water or cleaning the blackboard – remember to get permission from your teacher first!
- ✓ If distractions are a big problem when taking tests, ask the teacher about taking the test in a quiet area. If you need it, ask your teacher to give you more time to take the test.
- ✓ Work with your teacher or counselor to help you learn good study skills, test-taking skills and organizational skills.
- ✓ Keep all assignments in their subject folders. Check the folder for every subject and make sure you turn in your work!
- ✓ Before leaving school each day, do a checklist to make sure that you have everything you need to get your homework done for the next day.
- ✓ Study for **EVERY** test and quiz. Take a practice quiz or test the day before, which your parents can give you by asking practice questions.
- ✓ Proofread your work. People with ADHD sometimes rush too much and make silly mistakes, so it's very important to proofread and catch your mistakes. If you use a computer, make sure you check your spelling and grammar too!





THINGS TO DO AT HOME

To help you with your schoolwork, here are some things you can do at home:

- ✓ Find a quiet area for studying at home. Some kids like it quiet when doing homework, while other kids do better if there is soft music playing in the background. Try different ways and see what works best for you.
- ✓ Plan ahead! Don't put work aside until the last minute. When you rush to get things done, you might end up with sloppy or incomplete work. Give yourself enough time to do a good job.
- ✓ If you have a large project to do, break it down into smaller tasks and do each task one step at a time. Plan ahead about when you are going to complete each step.
- ✓ Use books-on-tape with reading if it helps you to hear information and remember it better.
- ✓ If it helps, keep a second set of schoolbooks and materials at home to make sure that you always have what you need. Your parents can discuss this with the teacher.



WHAT ABOUT MEDICATION?

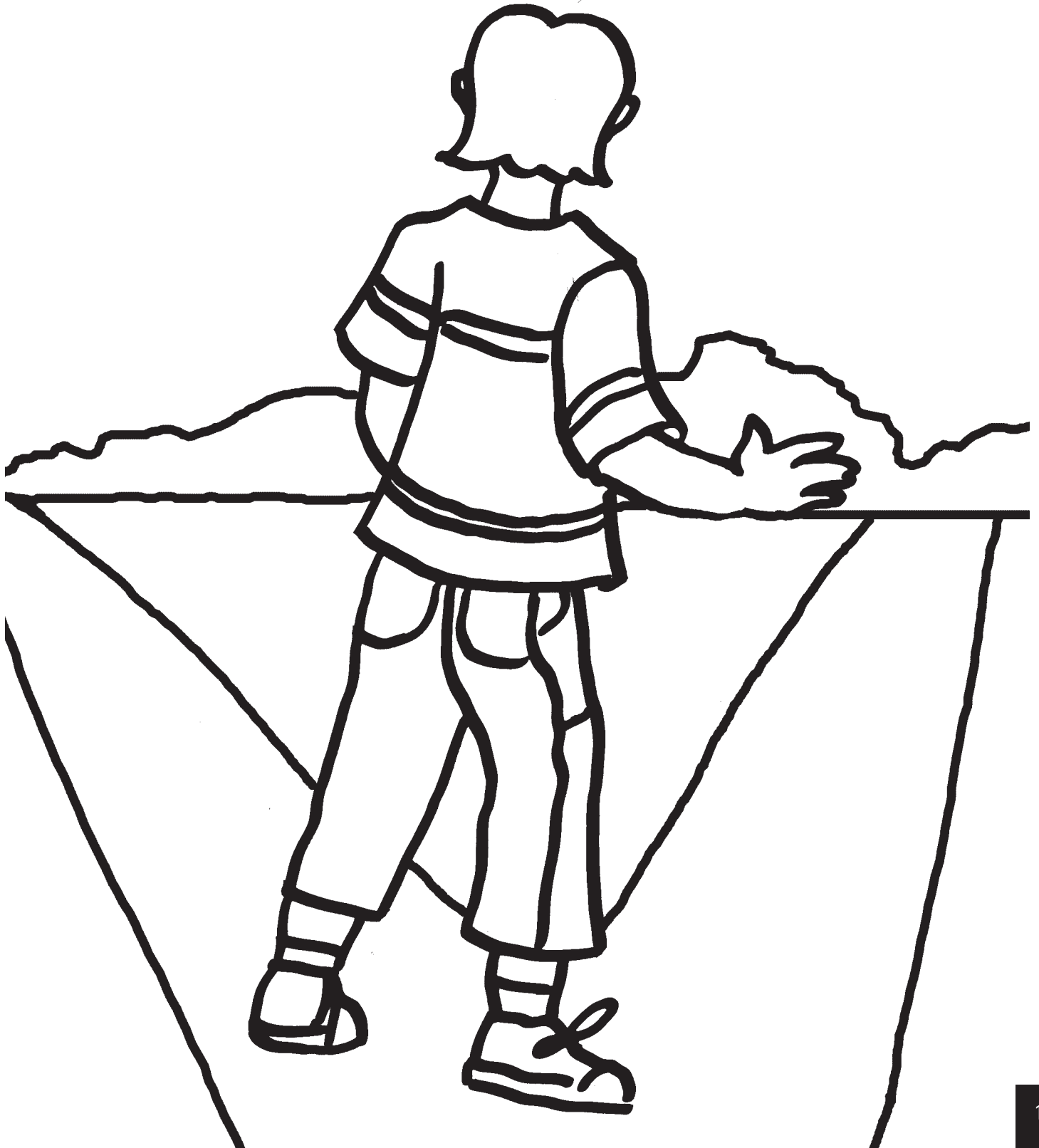
Scientists who study ADHD believe that certain parts of your brain work differently compared to those people without ADHD. Your brain might have too little of some brain chemicals called neurotransmitters, which control attention and impulses. Taking the right kind of medicine can give you more of these neurotransmitters (which your brain needs) so you can pay attention better, concentrate better and will not be as hyperactive. Your doctor and parents can figure out if you need to take medicine and which one is best for you.



FOR MORE INFORMATION

If you or your parents would like more information on ADHD, contact:

- ✓ The Learning Disabilities Association of Canada
www.ldac-taac.ca
- ✓ CHADD Canada (Children and Adults with Attention Deficit Disorder)
www.chaddcanada.org



REMEMBER:

Having ADHD is not a bad thing. People with ADHD have a lot of energy and creativity but sometimes need help with their schoolwork and other activities. Remember that everybody is a little different in their own way so you should be proud of who you are, just the way you are!





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