

## Myth:

"It's simple; once you start taking the medications, you'll be fine."

## Fact:

Treatment programs which include stimulant medication and behavioural modification techniques have been shown to be effective in improving the symptoms of ADHD.<sup>12</sup> However, there is still no cure for ADHD. Medical research has found that approximately 70% to 80% of people with ADHD respond to stimulant medications.<sup>13</sup> Stimulant medications do not "slow the brain down," rather they stimulate parts of the brain that help increase focus and one's ability to control their own behaviour.

Other effective treatments that may be combined with medication, or used independently, include behavioural management techniques and classroom interventions.

## Myth:

"Taking stimulant medications may cause drug abuse later on."

## Fact:

Not true. Years of research indicate that people with ADHD who are treated with a stimulant medication are actually less likely to subsequently abuse drugs or alcohol compared to people with ADHD who do not receive treatment.<sup>14</sup>

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# ADHD

# Myth

# versus

# Fact



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### Myth:

"ADHD does not really exist."

### Fact:

Scientific research has shown that ADHD is a biologically-based disorder affecting the brain.<sup>1,2</sup> People with ADHD have difficulty with concentration, impulse control and, sometimes, hyperactivity. While the causes of ADHD are not fully understood, recent research suggests that ADHD can be inherited<sup>3,4</sup> and may be due to differences in the structure, function and neurochemistry of the brain.<sup>1,5,6</sup>

### Myth:

"It's just a phase, he'll grow out of this."

### Fact:

Children with ADHD may or may not "grow out of it." About 60-80% of children with the disorder will continue to have ADHD symptoms into adolescence,<sup>7</sup> and some will experience symptoms that affect functioning into adulthood.<sup>8</sup> For youth growing up, hyperactive symptoms appear to decrease. However, attention problems often persist into adulthood. Adults with ADHD typically find that their symptoms diminish gradually as they get older or are less bothersome as they learn successful coping strategies.



### Myth:

"It's probably all that junk food my child eats or some other environmental problem that causes ADHD."

### Fact:

Special diets and limiting food additives or sugar will not prevent ADHD. However, paying attention to overall general health, including exercise, rest, and nutrition, can help your child manage their ADHD symptoms.

### Myth:

"My shy, daydreaming daughter can't have ADHD. I thought it only involved hyperactive little boys."

### Fact:

ADHD affects both males and females. However, girls with ADHD tend to be less hyperactive than boys, but they still have problems with concentration and sometimes impulse control.<sup>9,10</sup> It has been speculated that this may be why boys tend to be diagnosed with ADHD more often than girls.<sup>10</sup> There are 3 different types of ADHD. When a person has difficulties with attention but is not hyperactive, they may have the Predominantly Inattentive Type of ADHD.<sup>11</sup>



### Myth:

"If parents would discipline their children like in the old days, kids wouldn't have these behaviours."

### Fact:

Since the causes of ADHD are genetic and biological, parents cannot cause ADHD by how they parent or discipline the child. However, parents can influence a child's ability to control his or her ADHD behaviours by how they respond to the child's actions. Providing positive reinforcement for good behaviour is one important strategy that can be used by parents.

### Myth:

"He can't have ADHD. After all, he has no trouble focusing on things he wants to do, like playing computer games."

### Fact:

People who can concentrate some of the time may still have ADHD. People with ADHD have difficulty attending to most tasks for periods of time, but they (like many people) can concentrate on things that interest them and are stimulating, such as computer games.

