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**Adult Attention Deficit Disorder**

**By Jeannine Virtue**

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Attention Deficit Disorder tends to focus predominately on children, leaving the ADD adult largely underserved. Most of the information presented about Attention Deficit Disorder focuses on children, parenting and school issues. All but one ADHD medication currently on the market achieved FDA approval for adult Attention Deficit Disorder treatment.

Attention Deficit Disorder simply was not in vogue when the adult of today was a child decades ago. While today many express concerns of over diagnosis of Attention Deficit Disorder in children, many also acknowledge the under diagnosing of adults with Attention Deficit Disorder.

Adults with ADD often realize that they have Attention Deficit Disorder when their own child is diagnosed. Looking through the list of symptoms, the parent often sees similarities in their own present or past behavior.

Yet, the hurdles of Attention Deficit are often the same, whether in a child or an adult. The ADD adult might have trouble with staying on task, staying organized and procrastinating, just as the Attention Deficit Disorder child does. The Attention Deficit Disorder adult might have trouble maintaining relationships and controlling their mood, just like an ADD or ADHD child. The main difference between the ADD adult and the ADD child is that the adult with Attention Deficit typically has more sophisticated coping mechanisms.

For the better part, the Attention Deficit Disorder ADD ADHD symptom test outlined for children is about the same for the adult, with the word "work" substituted for "school." You can also look at the Attention Deficit Disorder test for children and ask yourself if, as a child, you had such symptoms or currently have such Attention Deficit Disorder symptoms.

Below is an adult symptom test with symptoms unique to the Attention Deficit Disorder adult. This self test is not a diagnostic test but a source of information for the adult trying to determine if Attention

## Adult Attention Deficit Disorder

Deficit Disorder might be present in their life.

### Adult ADD Symptom Test:

If you experience more than 10 points on this adult ADD self symptom test, Attention Deficit Disorder is likely present. An internal sense of anxiety Impulsive spending habits Frequent distractions during sex Frequently misplace the car keys, your purse or wallet or other day-to-day items Lack of attention to detail Family history of ADD, learning problems, mood disorders or substance abuse problems Trouble following the proper channels or chain of commands An attitude of "read the directions when all else fails" Frequent traffic violations Impulsive job changes Trouble maintaining an organized work and/or home environment Chronically late or always in a hurry Frequently overwhelmed by tasks of daily living Poor financial management and frequent late bills Procrastination Spending excessive time at work due to inefficiencies Inconsistent work performance Sense of underachievement Frequent mood swings Trouble sustaining friendships or intimate relationships A need to seek high

stimulation activities Tendency toward exaggerated outbursts Transposing numbers, letters, words Tendency toward being argumentative Addictive personality toward food, alcohol, drugs, work and/or gambling. Tendency to worry needlessly and endlessly "Thin-skinned" – having quick or exaggerated responses to real or imagined slights.

So you hit a number of points on the adult ADD self symptom test, now what?

First, it is important that a physician rule out conditions like anxiety, depression, hypothyroidism, manic-depressions or obsessive compulsive disorder that can mimic Attention Deficit Disorder symptoms. Hormonal imbalances in perimenopause and menopause can produce foggy thinking, anxiety and exaggerated outbursts. Women should rule out perimenopause if the Attention Deficit symptoms appear in their late 30s or 40s.

Physicians typically first prescribe antidepressants like Prozac for an adult with ADD, since depression issues often go hand-in-hand with adult ADD. Physicians usually move to stimulant medications like Adderall, Concerta or Ritalin or Strattera if antidepressants do not work.

The stimulant medication treatment route is not recommended for people with a history of drug or alcohol use or abuse since these are controlled substances with a fairly high degree of addiction potential in adults. Some adults find that the side effects of ADHD medications are not worth the benefits of the medication.

The Attention Deficit Disorder adult can find help naturally without the side effects of ADD medication treatment by incorporate diet, exercise and lifestyle modifications.

### Release the Steam, Quiet the Mind:

Regular and vigorous exercise can be very helpful for the Attention Deficit Disorder adult. Attention Deficit Disorder adults tend to have addictive personalities. Exercise is a good addiction. Aside from the obvious health benefits, regular exercise is also a great way to release steam and quiet the mind.

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Some studies also link regular exercise to decreased depression – a condition common with Attention Deficit Disorder adults.

Diet:

The brain is a hungry organ that cannot function at optimal levels without the proper fuels. To keep the brain functioning at top performance, ADHD diets packed with brain boosting essential fatty acids and amino acids is a must. A diet high in lean protein provides amino acids necessary for brain functioning.

The ADD adult can also meet these crucial dietary requirements for Attention Deficit Disorder by taking a high-quality nutritional supplement to ensure that they are giving the brain the fuel it needs to function properly.

Restructuring the ADD adult environment:

The Attention Deficit Disorder adult should get into the habit of making lists. The list should include any and all tasks required for the day, from "Mop the kitchen floor" to "Finish the sales proposal."

Write your list with the tasks of highest priority first. Once the highest priority task is completed, mark it off and go to the next. Warding off the urge to skip around on the list will take some discipline but the sense of accomplishment at completed tasks is well worth the effort.

The Attention Deficit Disorder adult should also keep a notepad in their car, purse, coat and on their bed stand. Thoughts come and go quickly. Jotting the good ideas down will ensure that they don't go away quickly – assuming the notepad does not get lost in the process...

The alarm clock or a wristwatch with an alarm can be a great tool for the Attention Deficit Disorder adult. If you need to pick your child up from soccer practice at a certain time, set the alarm. If you have food cooking on the stove and you leave the kitchen, set the alarm. If you have an important appointment, set the alarm.

Large tasks tend to overwhelm the Attention Deficit Disorder adult and they often put off large task as long as possible. It is not uncommon for the Attention Deficit Disorder adult to procrastinate until the "11th Hour" and then pull an all-night jam session trying to meet a deadline.

For large tasks, the Attention Deficit Disorder adult will do well to break the task into smaller, more manageable tasks and attach deadlines to the smaller tasks. If you need to finish a large project in one week, for instance, schedule specific time each day to work on a specific aspect of the project.

An adult with Attention Deficit Disorder might also find it beneficial to enlist the help of a coach. A coach is a close and trusted friend, co-worker or therapist whose specific function is to help the Attention Deficit Disorder adult stay organized, on track and focused while providing encouragement.

Jeannine Virtue is a freelance writer and mother of an Attention Deficit teen. For information about effective drug-free ADHD treatment, visit

## How ADD Affects Families

By Sarah K. Jenkins

Typically, there is a lot of blame and frustration associated with Attention Deficit Disorder. Depending on how long the problem has gone before being diagnosed, there may be serious mental and emotional scars as family members and the child dealt with issues associated with ADD. This disorder is not only difficult for parents, but also the child with ADD and other siblings in the family.

The obvious victim of ADD is the child it affects. Being accustomed to negativity, these children usually suffer from very low self-esteem. Although they want to behave well, they have impulsive actions that typically result in constant punishment. Parents and teachers of an ADD child often are not aware or do not accept that the child suffers from a disorder and they are not always acting on a conscience level. The child, after being reprimanded and not being able to control their actions, is left feeling as though they will never be adequate or meet everyone else's expectations.

The parents of an ADD child suffer from incredible frustration and doubt of their parenting skills. Often ridiculed by teachers, family members, and other acquaintances, they are often viewed as being the cause of their child's behavior, as though lack of discipline is the root cause of their child's actions. Attention Deficit Disorder sometimes places a strain on the parents' marital relationship as well, as parents blame each other for being overly lenient or harsh in their rearing habits. This can lead to many arguments and disagreements that prove to be difficult on spouses.

An often forgotten casualty of Attention Deficit Disorder is the siblings of a child with ADD. Often not apparent, siblings in this situation often experience similar frustration and anxiety as the parents and child with ADD. Jealousy sometimes plays a factor in their feelings as their sibling requires so much more attention, even if it is negative in nature. Also, these children often get the brunt of their sibling's impulsive actions, including aggressive behavior typical of ADD. These children may also find themselves being categorized in school and other social environments because of their sibling's behavior, which can also have a negative connotation.

In addition to immediate family, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins may also be affected when a child has ADD. Depending on the closeness of the family, behavior outbursts and discipline issues may be a factor dealt with on various levels. In extreme cases, ADD may actually cause some familial relationships to be severed.

Sarah is an acclaimed writer on medical matters, and has written extensively on the subjects of Attention Deficit Disorder, Bird Flu and Cohn's Disease. For more of her articles, go to

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