



# ATTENTION • DEFICIT HYPERACTIVITY • DISORDER

## What is ADHD?

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder is a neurodevelopmental condition that results in difficulty concentrating and staying focused, inability to control impulses or inhibit inappropriate behaviours and poor emotional control. People with ADHD may be overly restless or fidgety. It is more commonly diagnosed in boys than girls.

It is more commonly associated with childhood, where it can affect children's learning and social skills and family functioning, however it can also persist across the life span and result in increased rates of criminality, drug abuse and other mental health problems.

Many of the impairments experienced in ADHD are underwritten by key deficits in cognitive processes encompassing reward, attention, working memory, inhibition and cognitive flexibility. Deficits in these areas in turn lead to problems in broader skills such as reasoning, language comprehension, spatial processing and planning.

There are treatments that can help modify the behavioural symptoms of people with ADHD that involve a combination of medication and psychological therapies.

The precise causes of ADHD have not yet been identified. The fact that ADHD can run in families suggests a strong genetic link. Some environmental factors have also been associated with ADHD, and it is likely to be a complex interaction between multiple genetic risk factors and the influence of certain environments at particular stages of development.

**ADHD is one of the most common mental disorders among Australian children—around 7.4% of children and adolescents have a diagnosis of ADHD.**

**7.4% OR AROUND  
307,000  
AUSTRALIAN CHILDREN**

