

Patient information from BMJ

Last published: Nov 28, 2018

Coping strategies for teenagers and adults with ADHD

Experts used to think that children grew out of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) when they were teenagers. Although it's true that the symptoms of hyperactivity often improve as children get older, we now know that many people who had ADHD as children still have difficulty with concentration, impulsive behaviour, and relationships as teenagers and adults.

If you're a teenager or adult with ADHD, you may need to continue taking medicines and having talking treatments to manage your ADHD symptoms. Adopting certain strategies may also help you cope day to day.

- If you can't remember an instruction, ask your teacher or boss to repeat it. Don't just guess.
- Break big jobs into smaller stages, and reward yourself as you finish each one.
- Make a list of what you need to do each day. Then put these tasks in the order you intend to do them. Cross each thing off the list as soon as you've done it.
- Work in a quiet area.
- Do one thing at a time.
- Take regular short breaks.
- Carry a notebook and write down things you need to remember.
- Use Post-it notes to remind yourself of things you need to do. Put them where you will notice them, such as on your fridge or car dashboard.
- Consider using a smart phone or other electronic tools to make lists, keep track of appointments, and schedule reminders.
- Store similar things together. For example, bills should be separate from personal letters.
- Create a routine. Get up and go to bed at the same times each day.
- Exercise, eat a balanced diet, and try to get enough sleep.

Coping strategies for teenagers and adults with ADHD

The patient information from *BMJ Best Practice* from which this leaflet is derived is regularly updated. The most recent version of Best Practice can be found at bestpractice.bmj.com. This information is intended for use by health professionals. It is not a substitute for medical advice. It is strongly recommended that you independently verify any interpretation of this material and, if you have a medical problem, see your doctor.

Please see BMJ's full terms of use at: bmj.com/company/legal-information. BMJ does not make any representations, conditions, warranties or guarantees, whether express or implied, that this material is accurate, complete, up-to-date or fit for any particular purposes.

© BMJ Publishing Group Ltd 2018. All rights reserved.

