

## **ADHD**

Children differ in their activity and energy levels. Some children are by nature lively and energetic, while others tend to be quiet. So what differentiates a child who is overactive from a child who suffers from hyperactivity? How do we know that a child who seems over active is simply a high energy child, or whether he has ADHD? 'Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder' sure seems like a daunting diagnosis for a child, who, for all probability, seems only to be overly energetic. Does this child, whose only problems are that he can't sit still in one place for long and gets easily bored with his toys, really have an illness that sounds so menacing? It is this that creates confusion and fear in the minds of parents. For this very reason, it is important to understand what ADHD really means. What is it caused by? What are its symptoms?

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder is a disorder usually detected in childhood. Although the symptoms of the disorder are largely behavioural, it is now known that the disorder is primarily biological in nature. Specifically, it is considered to be a cerebral development disorder; i.e., some areas of the child's cerebrum develop differently from other children. While the symptoms of ADHD are largely behavioural in nature (show up as behaviours), it is important for parents to understand that the disorder is rooted in biological aspects of the brain, and the child does not voluntarily display these behaviours. In other words, the child does not set out to misbehave, nor does he plan to get into mischief.

Essentially, ADHD is characterized by the following triad of symptoms:

- Hyperactivity
- Inattention
- Impulsivity

Some typical characteristics of children with ADHD are:

- Low attention span
- Inability to persevere at a task for long
- Distractible
- Fidgety; unable to sit or stand still for long
- Careless; tendency to lose or misplace things
- Difficulty keeping quiet

- Taming the Tornado

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