

# Fact Sheet

Developed by The Center for Disability Studies and Universal Access

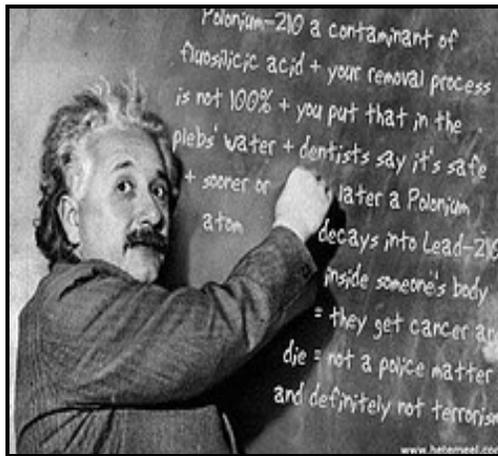
## ADD/ADHD

### Quick Facts

ADHD is a diagnosis applied to people who consistently display certain characteristic behaviors over a period of time, such as impulsivity, distractibility and high-energy.

About 8 million (1 in 20) adults in the United States have ADHD. Eighty-five percent have not even been formally diagnosed or treated. This means that almost every classroom probably has students with ADHD, whether they know it or not.

To meet diagnostic criteria, behaviors must be excessive, long-term, and pervasive and create a difficulty in at least two areas of a person's life, such as work, school, home or social settings.



*A recent article published by the American Psychological Association asks the question "What if Einstein had taken Ritalin?". More specifically, the article speculates how Einstein might have been affected if he had taken Ritalin for his learning disability. If he had been on Ritalin, would he still have made the historical discoveries he is credited for?*

**Causes:** ADHD has a strong genetic basis and is very likely caused by biological factors which influence neurotransmitter activity, especially dopamine and norepinephrine in certain parts of the brain.

**Results:** An inability to prioritize, plan, and schedule can cause missed assignment deadlines. Blurting out inappropriately in class can compromise classroom ambience and energy and relationships with other students and professors.

Difficulty sustaining attention creates the possibility of missing important rules, concepts, conversations, instructions or other relevant information needed to succeed. Lost keys/PDAs, missed appointments, and confused directions may make a person late which can undermine academic performance.

### Successful Classroom Strategies

- To reach a student with ADD who has trouble starting a task, provide structure to this student to get the assignment going, such as a model outline or detailed instructions for library research.
- Some students with ADD may have trouble ending one assignment and picking up another. Thus, suggest that the student "cut-off the research" and begin writing their paper.
- Schedule breaks during long classes so that ADD students will be able to channel energy in a positive direction.
- Your expectations for assignments should be both in writing, such as in a structured rubric, and explained orally in class.
- Divide larger assignments into smaller tasks with step-by-step directions.
- When expecting memory recall, provide assistance by using cues for recalling the information.
- Provide visual aids, such as PowerPoint, to support the class lecture and assist the students who do not have strong auditory skills processing.
- Vary classroom work and at-home assignments to include "tactile and kinesthetic instructional resources."
- Permit students to select their own seats in the classroom. ADD students may benefit from sitting closer to the professor.
- Provide examples to students when assigning written material.

## POSITIVE ATTRIBUTES OF ADHD

Adventurous, courageous, lives outside of boundaries

Attractive personality – magnetic due to high energy

Can talk about several things at one time

Constantly evolving

Flexible – changes as the situation requires

Hands-on workers

Has the gift of gab

High energy – go, go, go

Idea generator

Likes learning new things

Never bored and rarely boring

Persistent

Spontaneous

Visual learner

## STUDY TIPS FOR STUDENTS WITH ADHD

1. Determine your goals and prioritize the tasks in front of you. Offer yourself mini breaks for transitions and build in extra time for the unexpected.
2. Write things down as thoughts and ideas come to you and then get back on task. You won't forget what you were thinking about and can get back to it later. Use notebooks to keep and organize your thoughts.
3. Doing things one step at a time. Writing down the steps, no matter how small, involved in a task and then crossing them off as they are accomplished.
4. Timers. Set timers to go off at an interval, say 15 minutes, reminding you to stay on task.
5. Use Personal Digital Assistants such as Palm Pilots. "Handyshop" is a program that allows listing by category or quantity. "Bug Me" is a program that lets you write notes to yourself and sets alarms throughout the day or week.
6. A small recording device such as telephone answering machine. Use a cell phone to leave yourself messages so that a reminder is given for tasks later in the day.
7. Color. The use of brightly colored cue cards, Post-it notes or index cards, can help you to visually orient and organize materials.
8. Work where you work the best. You can eliminate distracters with headphones. or a noise machine.

## Resources and Further Information



- University of Washington Do-It Program  
Box355670  
Seattle, WA 98195-5670  
[doit@u.washington.edu](mailto:doit@u.washington.edu)
  - Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
1600Clifton Rd.  
Atlanta , Georgia 30333  
[cdcinfo@cdc.gov](mailto:cdcinfo@cdc.gov)
  - National Institute of Mental Health  
6001 Executive Boulevard Room 8184  
Bethesda, MD 20892  
<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health>
  - Heath Resource Center. (1993).  
Students with Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD).  
Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education  
National Attention Deficit Disorder Association  
<http://www.add.org/>
- CDSUA– Center for Disability Studies and Universal Access.  
Senior Hall RM 229  
Cheney, WA 99004  
509-359-4584  
<http://www.accessall@ewu.edu>

### About Us...

Our Office was developed with the support of a Department of Education Grant, *Supporting Students with Disabilities through Professional Faculty Development and Student Curriculum*. We are committed to improving the educational environment for students with disabilities and believe that an effective way to reach our goals is to promote an environment of **Universal Education Access (UEA)** to all people regardless of background or characteristics.

