



Parenting Part II: Teens can be diagnosed with ADHD too

By **Kim Painter**, Special for USA TODAY

Updated 10/24/2011 6:32 PM

19

Recommend

14



Call it "the homework sign." Ari Tuckman, a psychologist in [West Chester, Pa.](#), says he knows the teenager in his office probably has attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) if he hears this: The teen does his homework — but often forgets to turn it in.



Parenting, Part II

By **Kim Painter**

Ads by Google

Get Support for ADD/ADHD

Improve Your Focus & Attention Now. Get a 90-Day Money Back Guarantee!

NaturalWellBeing.com/ADD-Support

Brain Test™

Developed by Neuroscientists Improve Memory and Attention

www.lumosity.com

U2 on iTunes

Get the 20th anniversary edition of Achtung Baby. Available on iTunes.

www.apple.com/iTunes

Oklahoma Health Sciences Center.

A teen's view

Nicole Snyder, 17, got pretty good grades as a young student. But by 10th grade, she was struggling. "I got used to not doing well on tests," says the high school senior from Elkridge, Md. "I lost my confidence."

While not wildly hyperactive, "in class, I was always changing positions and I couldn't stay focused. And reading was a big problem. Physically, I was reading, but an hour later, I had no idea what I read."

When her younger brother was diagnosed with ADHD, she and her parents wondered: Did she have the same problem? After "a bunch of testing," a doctor agreed that she did. He prescribed a medication to help her

These kids also have textbook symptoms of ADHD, including inattentiveness and easy distractibility. But they've made it through early childhood without detection, Tuckman says, usually because they do not have the type of ADHD that involves running around and creating havoc.

"The hyperactive kids make themselves known," he says. "The inattentive ones fly under the radar."

But both sorts, studies show, are at risk for problems ranging from car crashes to dropping out of school.

Tuckman and other specialists hope new guidelines from the [American Academy of Pediatrics](#) will help pediatricians spot more of these teens. The guidelines say doctors should follow up on suspicious signs in kids ages 4 to 18. Previous versions covered kids 6-12; the change reflects new studies on diagnosis and treatment of younger and older kids, says lead author Mark Wolraich, a professor of pediatrics at the University of

Teens (and some preschoolers) were getting diagnosed before these guidelines. But if more affected teens now get timely help, that will be a good thing, some parents say.

"It's been a long road," says Clara McCall, 39, of Apex, N.C., who has a 15-year-old daughter just diagnosed with ADHD, after many visits to doctors and psychologists. Now, she says, the family is trying to help the bright 10th grader get back on track after "she almost failed 9th grade."

Robin Snyder, 43, of Elkridge, Md., says her daughter Nicole, 17, is thriving in school since starting medication

Videos you may be interested in



Raw Video: Plane lands in Poland wheels up



Woman details encounter between house ...



Furnished Apts NYC [FurnishedQuarters.cc](#)

Powered by **Taboola** [More videos](#)

Advertisement

Most Popular

Stories

- Prolonged sitting linked to breast cancer,...
- New drug targets underlying cause of cystic...
- Clearing out 'old cells' may make for a...
- Behold the agelessness of these...
- Loneliness linked to restlessness,...

Videos

- Department of Homeland Security public service announcement
- Occupy Oakland protestors clash with police
- Police, Occupy protestors clash in Oakland

Most Popular E-mail Newsletter

Sign up to get:

Top viewed stories, photo galleries and community posts of the day

Most popular right now:

[Ex-wife of Texas judge calls his beatings an 'addiction'](#)



Sign up for USA TODAY E-mail newsletters

Helping breast health



Your Life: Health

focus. Now, "I'm much more engaged, and I'm enjoying my classes." Her grades are up, too.

for ADHD in the spring. But "if we had known this a lot sooner, she would have benefited."

Not every struggling high-schooler has ADHD. Even when some signs are there, the new guidelines say pediatricians should look for other explanations — including substance abuse, anxiety and depression. Doctors also should watch for healthy teens seeking stimulant drugs to get an academic edge, Wolraich says.

Teens who have ADHD often don't ask for help. So parents should ask a doctor's advice if they see signs including "consistent patterns of forgetfulness, misplacing things, poor follow-through, rushing through homework and procrastinating to the last minute," says [David Goodman](#), a psychiatrist and assistant professor at [Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine](#), Baltimore.

Diagnosed teens should try medication and may benefit from behavioral therapies, the pediatricians' group says.

Parents can help:

- Create consistent routines.** Help your teen make and stick to routines for sleeping, studying and eating. Encourage them to set up their own electronic schedules and automated reminders, Goodman suggests.
- Be extra-vigilant about driving.** "Set the rules, monitor the rules and enforce the rules," says Gregory Fabiano, a psychologist at the University at Buffalo, N.Y. He leads a pilot program in which parents and teens with ADHD agree to strict rules on speeding, cell-phones and more. Parents then monitor teens through in-car devices and teens use driving simulators to sharpen skills.
- Warn teens not to sell or share medications.** Tell them it "is a federal offense and can have serious consequences," Wolraich says. And when teens move to college or elsewhere, make sure they know how to store drugs securely, to prevent theft.

For more information about [reprints & permissions](#), visit our [FAQ's](#). To report corrections and clarifications, contact [Standards Editor Brent Jones](#). For publication consideration in the newspaper, send comments to letters@usatoday.com. Include name, phone number, city and state for verification. To view our corrections, go to corrections.usatoday.com.

Posted 10/24/2011 5:32 PM | Updated 10/24/2011 6:32 PM



More from USATODAY

- [Parents get new tools to detect ADHD in their kids](#) USATODAY.com in Life
- [The well-being checklist](#) USATODAY.com - Your life
- [Aspirin may cut colon cancer risk by 60%](#) USATODAY.com - Your life
- [Replacing \\$1 bill with coin could save \\$5.6 billion](#) USATODAY.com in News
- [Law aims to give more accurate tally of college costs](#) USATODAY.com in News

More from the web

- [What is Narcissistic Personality Disorder](#) Mental Health Guru
- [Help Your Immune System Fight Back Against MS With These Disease-Modifying Therapies](#) Healthcommunities
- [Can the Practice of Buddhist Detachment Make you Feel Happier?](#) HealthCentral.com
- [AAP: Preschool-Aged Children Can Now Be Diagnosed With ADHD](#) Parenting.com
- [Hospital Electronic Records Adoption Jumps, but Still Low](#) CIO

[?]

We've updated the [Conversation Guidelines](#). Changes include a brief review of the moderation process and an explanation on how to use the "Report Abuse" button. [Read more](#).

What Do You Think?

To leave a comment, you need to sign up.

[Sign up](#)
[Log in](#)

17 comments

Sort: Oldest to Newest

	frieswiththat	Score: 5
6:47 PM on October 24, 2011		Report Abuse
Sure, why not come up with yet another excuse for bad behavior?		
1 reply		
	uknowit2	Score: 2
7:21 PM on October 24, 2011		Report Abuse
Let's just throw Adderall and Ritalin at everyone, and give everyone cholesterol medication and heart medications and diabetes medications. That's exactly what the drug companies WANT. The key is to EDUCATE people and invest money on nutrition and lifestyle management, not DRUGS! (The stories in this rag are driving me mad....)		
	dugan3223	Score: 6
7:31 PM on October 24, 2011		Report Abuse
Just an untapped market for the drug pushers.		
	headbone	Score: 2
8:30 PM on October 24, 2011		Report Abuse
adhd isa great place to visit, but i wouldn't want to live there all the time...		
	truckman	Score: 3
9:32 PM on October 24, 2011		Report Abuse
what a great way to absolve accountability and responsibility. My child has ADD and has a folder with all homework assignments written down with due dates while at school. Once home, there is no "I forgot" excuse. yes she is forgetful, yes there are tools they can use to make life better.		
Its not easy but my child will be better prepared for the real world.		
	ItTollsForThee	Score: 4
6:46 AM on October 25, 2011		Report Abuse
Create an affliction and tailor a drug to it.		
	JosephLCooke	Score: 4
6:55 AM on October 25, 2011		Report Abuse
ADHD = Huge scam.		
1 reply		
	mousebird	Score: -6
8:41 AM on October 25, 2011		Report Abuse
I blame corn syrup for ADHD and others...		
		Score: 4



SashaS1971

9:30 AM on October 25, 2011

Report Abuse

Have you lived with someone that had ADHD? I have, and it's no fun trying to discipline the person and keep him/her on task. And I love to hear the unknowing blame it on refined sugar, preservatives or some food related substance. If you look at the child's parents and, yes, even the grandparents, you can see where the child was passed the genes to this disorder. Some of the aforementioned substances may exacerbate the problem, but they are not the cause.

So, all you perfect people that have all the answers, thanks for your input, but until you have lived with someone with ADHD, you can kindly keep your uninformed opinions to yourself. Unless you're an expert (Scientist or Psychologist), having researched this subject for years and experienced first hand an ADHD child, your comments are worthless.



12-21-2012

Score: 2

11:42 AM on October 25, 2011

Report Abuse

WAY too many kids have been diagnosed with it. So many that kids with true problems probably get overlooked. Not turning in homework ? Seriously ? Previous generations have considered that either "Normal" or "Poor Parenting". And since no one is no longer normal, and there are no such things as bad parents, the kid MUST be sick.

Next



Ads by Google

Have An ADHD Kid?

Get Support And Tips From Other Moms Going Through The Same Thing.
www.cafemom.com

Chadd Adhd

Learn About Chadd Adhd Now. Let HealthyNow Be Your Guide.
healthynow.com

Cutting & Teenage Girls

Residential youth treatment for Self-cutting behavior in girl 13-20
www.mclean.harvard.edu

USA Today Your Life

Your Life USA Today

Search

- Health
- Alternative
- Alzheimer's
- Autism
- Breast cancer
- Cancer
- Cold & flu
- Dental
- Depression
- Diabetes
- Heart disease
- Kids' health
- Men's health
- Mental health
- Women's health
- Fitness
- Exercise
- Family fitness challenge
- Food
- Recipes & cooking
- Diet & nutrition

[Safety](#)
[Family](#)
[Babies](#)
[Daycare](#)
[Pregnancy](#)
[Special needs](#)
[Teens & young adults](#)
[Relationships](#)
[Dating](#)
[Marriage](#)
[Mind & Soul](#)
[Doing Good](#)
[Spirituality](#)
[Education](#)
[Health Care](#)
[Hospitals](#)
[Government](#)
[Doctors & nurses](#)
[Pets](#)
[Cats](#)
[Dogs](#)

[Home](#) | [News](#) | [Travel](#) | [Money](#) | [Sport](#) | [Life](#) | [Your Life](#) | [Tech](#) | [Weather](#)

Visit our Partners: [USA WEEKEND](#) | [USA TODAY LIVE](#) | [Sports Weekly](#) | [Education](#) | [Space.com](#) | [Travel Tips](#)

[Contact us](#) | [Advertise](#) | [Pressroom](#) | [Developer](#) | [Media Lounge](#) | [Jobs](#) | [FAQ](#) | [Reprints/Permissions](#) | [Privacy Notice/Your California Privacy Rights](#) | [Ad Choices](#)
[Terms of Service](#) | [Site Index](#)

2011 USA Today, a division of Gannett Co. Inc.