



The Happy Apple

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Newsletter: Health Department of the Seventh-day Adventist Church Tasmania

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ADHD

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is a developmental problem which results in poor concentration and control of impulses. It can affect children's learning and social skills, and also family functioning. It is not an illness. With medical treatment, understanding and care, a child with ADHD can live a normal life. About 3-5 of every 100 children in Australia have ADHD. It is much more common in boys than girls.

Symptoms and diagnosis

The diagnosis of ADHD must be made by a trained and experienced health professional, using information from both the family and the school. It is important to make sure the symptoms are not caused by something else, which may need different treatment.

Common signs and symptoms are:

- **Inattention** - Difficulty concentrating, forgetting instructions, moving from one task to another without completing anything.
- **Impulsivity** - Talking over the top of others, losing control of emotions easily, being accident prone.
- **Overactivity** - Constant fidgeting and restlessness.

It is important to remember that all young children have a limited attention span and sometimes do things without thinking. A diagnosis can only be made after a range of information is collected - especially by parents. The symptoms must be obvious in most areas of the child's life. There is no single test. If you are concerned about your child, see your GP who can arrange a referral to a paediatrician, or child psychiatrist to make the assessment.

Treatment for ADHD

Medication

At this point, stimulant medication is the single most effective treatment for the symptoms of ADHD. Stimulants became a standard treatment in the 1980s and approximately 1-2% of all Australian children are prescribed stimulant medication. Any side effects can usually be controlled with changes to the dose and strength.

Behaviour strategies

Positive parenting along with home and classroom strategies such as keeping structure, boosting self-esteem,

building social skills and planning the physical and learning environment all help. Sometimes counselling for the child or the family is also needed.

Key points to remember

- Children with ADHD need support and understanding from family and teachers.
- Not all children who are inattentive, impulsive and overactive have ADHD.
- No single test can diagnose ADHD. Assessment by a doctor or psychologist involves putting together lots of pieces of information to make a diagnosis.
- Medication, positive parenting strategies, school support and counselling can help most children with ADHD and their families.

ADHD - ways to help children with ADHD

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) can affect children's learning and social skills, and the way a family functions. Medication, behaviour modification, home and classroom strategies and sometimes counselling can all help children with ADHD at home and at school.

Verbal instructions

- Keep instructions brief and clear.
- Say the child's name or tap them on the shoulder to make and keep eye contact when giving important information.
- Ask your child to repeat the instruction to make sure they have taken it in and understood.
- Your child may need prompting, monitoring and encouragement to keep them focused on tasks.

Written work

- Highlight important points in written information using *asterisks*, CAPITAL LETTERS or bold text.
- Limit the amount of information that needs to be copied from a black or white board. Instead, give 'hand out' sheets with this information

Other learning strategies

- Provide one-to-one instruction as often as possible.
- A class 'buddy', who gets along well with the child, can be helpful to reinforce instructions and directions.

- Make sure activities have plenty of 'hands on' involvement.
- Schedule the most important learning to take place during the child's best concentration time(s). This is usually in the morning.
- Give a checklist for what the child needs to do.

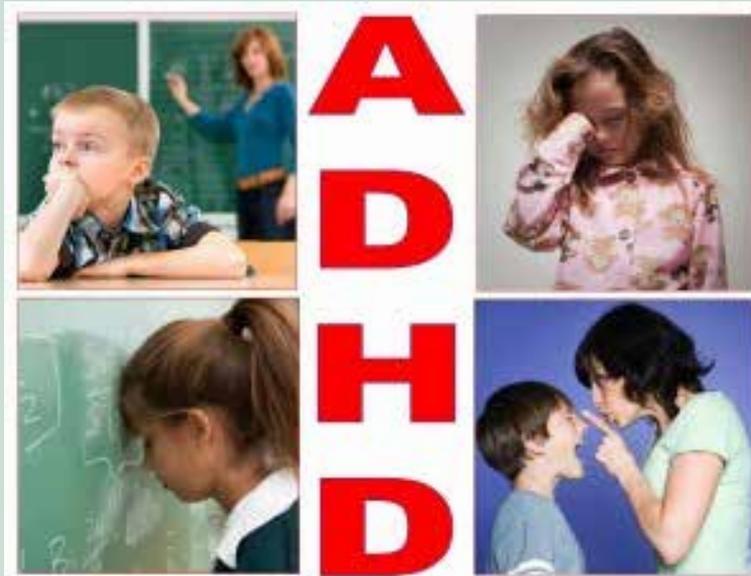
Physical environment

Sit them near the front of the classroom.

- Plan seating and furniture carefully to decrease distractions. For example, sit the child near classmates who will be good role models.
- A quiet place without clutter is important for homework

Reducing over-activity and fatigue

- Build rest-breaks into activities. For example, a five minute break for each 30 minutes of activity.
- Alternate academic tasks with brief physical exercise. For example, the child could do structured tasks or errands such as delivering notes or taking lunch orders.
- Prepare a number of low-pressure fun activities for when the child needs to spend a few minutes calming down.



Keeping structure

Children with ADHD can struggle with changes to routine and need to know what to expect. The following strategies can help:

- Have a fixed routine.
- Keep classroom activities well organised and predictable.
- Display the daily schedule and classroom rules. For example, attach a flowchart to the inside of the child's desk or book.
- Tell the child in advance (whenever possible) of a change in the schedule.
- Give the child advance warning of changes. For example: 'in five minutes you will have to put your work away', and remind them more than once.
- Keep choices to a minimum.

Self-esteem

- Encourage the child to take part in activities where they will experience success.
- Set achievable goals.
- Acknowledge their achievements by congratulating them verbally and in written ways such as notes or certificates.
- Focus their attention on the good parts of their written work. For example, use a highlighter pen on the best sections of the child's work.

- Help them feel important in the classroom. For example, acknowledging their effort to do a task even if they don't succeed.
- Near the end of the day, review with the child their accomplishment/s for that day.
- Attend to learning difficulties as soon as possible to restore self-confidence.

Social skills

- Involve the child in smaller groups of no more than two other children, instead of larger groups, whenever possible.
- Reward appropriate behaviour such as sharing and cooperating.
 - Teach the child appropriate responses when they feel provoked. For example, teach them to walk away or talk to the teacher.
 - Encourage the child to join activities where 'supervised socialisation' is available, such as Scouts/Girl Guides or sporting groups.
 - Talk with the child about the consequences of their actions upon themselves and upon others.
 - Use visual prompts to remind the child to think before they act. For example, 'STOP, THINK, DO'.

Communication between home and school

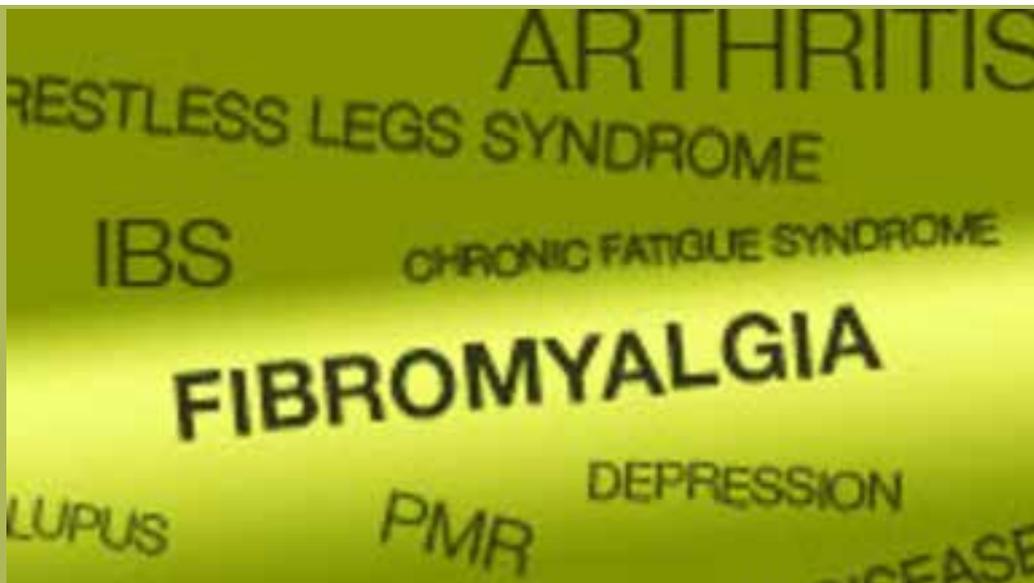
- Use a school-home daily communication book.
- Communicate both positive aspects of day and inappropriate behaviour.
- Teachers - be sensitive to parents' feelings. They have the difficult task of raising a child with ADHD.
- Teachers - help parents feel proud of their child. Find positive things to share with them about their child on a regular basis. This can be done in front of the child.

To help to encourage the child to complete homework parents can:

- Make the work environment attractive but not too distracting.
- Have regular scheduled time for homework.

Key points to remember

- Acknowledge and reward achievements and positive behaviour often.
- Attend to learning difficulties as soon as possible.
- A quiet place without clutter is important for homework.
- Talk with the child about the consequences of their actions.
- Medication, positive parenting strategies, school support and counselling can help most children with ADHD and their families.



Fibromyalgia is a condition in which people describe symptoms that include widespread pain and tenderness in the body, often accompanied by fatigue, cognitive disturbance and emotional distress.

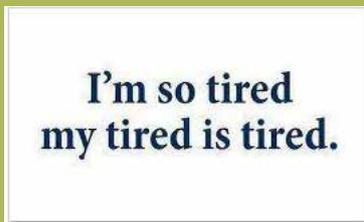
Fibromyalgia affects two to five per cent of the population, mainly women, although men and adolescents can also develop the condition. It tends to develop during middle adulthood.

Symptoms of fibromyalgia

The symptoms of fibromyalgia can vary from mild to severe.

The most common symptoms are:

- increased sensitivity to pain due to a decreased pain threshold
- increased responsiveness to sensory stimuli such as heat, cold, light and numbness or tingling
- extreme fatigue (tiredness)
- problems with cognition (impacting on memory and concentration)
- problems with sleep.



It is important to remember that each person with fibromyalgia will have their own unique set of symptoms.

The symptoms of fibromyalgia are variable. They can be mild, moderate or severe. Symptoms may disappear for extended periods of time, perhaps even years. Other people have pain every day, or experience variations between these two extremes.

Some people with fibromyalgia have other symptoms, such as irritable bowel syndrome, irritable or overactive bladder, headaches, and swelling and numbness or tingling in the arms and legs. Living with ongoing pain and fatigue often leads to secondary problems such as anxiety and depression.

Causes of fibromyalgia

The cause or causes of fibromyalgia are not known. It is more common in people with:

- lupus or rheumatoid arthritis
- an illness such as a virus (or a recent illness or infection)
- pain from an injury or trauma
- emotional stress and depression
- family history
- previous pain syndromes
- mood disorders
- substance abuse.

There is no cure for fibromyalgia, but treatment can help some symptoms.

Triggers for fibromyalgia symptoms

Fibromyalgia symptoms can be triggered or made worse by several factors, including:

- weather changes
- hard physical labour
- mental stress
- infections
- allergies
- overexertion
- other musculoskeletal disorders, such as rheumatoid arthritis or osteoarthritis.

Diagnosis of fibromyalgia

Fibromyalgia can be very difficult to diagnose as it does not cause any inflammation or damage. There are no blood tests, x-rays or scans that can test for fibromyalgia, but these tests may be used to exclude other conditions.

Signs that suggest a diagnosis of fibromyalgia are:

- widespread pain for three months or longer
- abnormal tenderness at particular points around the neck, shoulder, chest, hip, knee and elbow
- disturbed sleep patterns
- that a multimodal assessment and diagnosis is required.



Treatment for fibromyalgia

There is no cure for fibromyalgia. Effective management starts with a correct diagnosis. A management program should then be designed to meet each person's needs.

Generally, management of fibromyalgia will involve a combination of:

- **Education** – people with fibromyalgia need to understand the condition in order to decide which management approach will help them.
- **Medication** – combined with other strategies, medication may be used to manage pain, reduce stress or promote sleep.
- **Exercise** – a gentle aerobic exercise program, such as walking, tai chi or water-based exercise, can help to manage symptoms such as pain, fatigue and sleep disturbance.
- **Stress management and relaxation** – stress may aggravate symptoms. Skills that can help manage stress include planning, relaxation, assertiveness and emotional management.
- **Balancing rest and activity** – plan your activities to make the most of your energy by alternating periods of activity with rest. Break large jobs down into small achievable tasks so that you do not overdo things.
- **Massage** – this can aid muscle relaxation and stress management.
- **Nutrition** – eating a balanced diet can help provide you with better energy levels, help to maintain your weight, and give you a greater sense of wellbeing.

- **Support from others** – contact Arthritis and Osteoporosis Tasmania for information about support group locations and contact details.

Where to get help

- Your doctor
- Rheumatologist

Things to remember

- Fibromyalgia is a condition in which people describe widespread pain and tenderness in 'the body.'
- Each person with fibromyalgia will have their own set of symptoms.
- There is no cure for fibromyalgia, but symptoms can be managed.



HEALTH EVANGELISM: LOGICAL CHOICE



- Changes people
- Creates good will
- Improves health
- Prevents disease, lengthens life
- Clears the mind to hear God's voice
- Results in good will
- Deeper Spiritual experience
- Results in baptism and church growth

Tasmanian Health Professionals Forum

All Tasmanian health professionals are invited to attend a Health Ministry forum on the 20th August 2016 in Launceston at the TRAC centre with Pastor Gary Webster. For further details please contact Wendy Scott at the conference office. Email wendyscott@adventist.org.au Ph 6273 6277