

Treatment of ADHD

This leaflet has been given to you because you have been diagnosed with ADHD, or because you are suspected of suffering from ADHD.

[If you would rather read this information on your phone, you can go to www.psykiatri-regionh.dk/adhd](http://www.psykiatri-regionh.dk/adhd) (in Danish) or scan the QR code with your phone.



Types of treatment programmes

The mental health services offer several outpatient examination and treatment programmes for ADHD, ADD etc.

Examination and treatment programme for ADHD

The programme consists of planned examinations and interviews with the Team for ADHD and Autism at Glostrup Psychiatric Centre. The programme is nine hours in duration and covers diagnosis, physical examination, medication control and participation in an ADHD group.

The programme is the same throughout Denmark, so that everyone is offered the same examination and treatment options. Around 600 adults undergo an examination programme for ADHD every year in the Capital Region of Denmark's Mental Health Services.

The first sessions focus on diagnosis

You start by telling your life story and describing the problems you are experiencing to a psychiatrist, psychologist or nurse. You are also screened for autism, as approximately 30% suffer from both disorders to some extent.

The team will then decide whether you have ADHD/ADD, and if it is combined with autism.

Feel free to bring your partner, a good friend or a parent to the first session. Special evening events are also held for relatives.

Medical treatment

If you have ADHD/ADD, it is important to find out whether you would benefit from taking medication. Methylphenidate (also called Ritalin) is usually offered first, as a long-acting medication. Some find that the medication works very well, and they quickly get better at focusing and managing their daily life. You will often have to try taking several medications to find the best one. For a small number of people, medication is not effective.

Methylphenidate can have various side effects. For example, it can cause heart and blood vessel problems, leading to high blood pressure. Your blood pressure and heart rate will therefore be monitored regularly. Other side effects may include weight loss, lower sex drive, or feeling sad or anxious.

How long people take medication varies greatly

How long you need to take ADHD medication can vary greatly. Many people stop taking it after a few years when they feel they have their lives under control again. One advantage of methylphenidate is that it is short-acting. This means that you do not have to taper off the medication, and treatment has a quick effect when you start.

Various medications are available, so talk to your therapist if you experience side effects, so you can consider switching to another one.

Therapy – learning to understand yourself and how you react

ADHD is caused by a brain disorder and cannot be cured as such. The treatment therefore focuses on helping you to get to know yourself and your reactions better, so you can better manage your ADHD. New insights and strategies in difficult situations can help you build and lead a good and fulfilling life.

You will, for example, learn about the background to your diagnosis and how a brain with ADHD has a different way of seeing and perceiving the world. You will get to know your symptoms of ADHD, how to respond to them and what strategies are needed to better manage them.

Self-awareness makes you more robust

This self-awareness is also called psychoeducation, and it can help you become more robust and help you detect unhealthy stress in time. The more calm your life is, the better you can manage it.

You will be given tools to help you:

- learn to take breaks and withdraw when you need to
- know your limits
- structure your daily life and ensure that demands are manageable
- create a good sleep pattern
- find ways to resolve conflict situations.

Help to get further assistance from your municipality – if you are outside the labour market or the education system

Your municipality's job centre, social centre etc. will provide you with the necessary advice and guidance on your rights and the further help and support available when you suffer from ADHD.

This means that after the treatment programme, your municipality is your gateway to education, work, housing, finances, activity offers or socio-pedagogical and/or psychological treatment etc.

If deemed relevant, you and your relatives will be offered an interview with a social worker so that you can get information about special job or study opportunities, extra SU study grant portions or other support measures. This is not part of the treatment programme – and is only offered if you cannot contact your municipality yourself or if you are severely functionally impaired.

Your social worker or other staff can also help you fill out status reports, SU declarations and any other forms for your municipal case worker.

Follow-up with your own doctor, psychiatrist etc.

Once your medication is stable and the group sessions are completed, you will be referred to your GP for follow-up. If you need to talk to a psychiatrist or psychologist, you can be referred to a psychiatrist or psychologist in private practice via your doctor.

Special outpatient treatment programme if you are severely affected by your ADHD (regional function)

If the programme has not been sufficiently helpful, if your daily functioning is severely impaired, or if you have a drug addiction in addition to your ADHD, a special programme is offered that allows more time for examination, treatment and bridge-building to the municipal services, labour market etc.

Each year, around 200 people do this programme (also called a regional function), which takes place at the Glostrup Psychiatric Centre.

Outpatient support and treatment if you are severely affected by your ADHD (F-ACT team)

Some people with ADHD also suffer from other mental illnesses. This is also called comorbidity. It could be anxiety, depression, autism etc. Support and treatment by a F-ACT team, matched to your specific needs, may be an option in this case.

F-ACT stands for Flexible Assertive Community Treatment. It is a model of outreaching community care on which a lot of outpatient psychiatric care is based.

[You can read more about treatment at a F-ACT Team clinic at \[www.psykiatri-regionh.dk/f-act-team\]\(http://www.psykiatri-regionh.dk/f-act-team\)](http://www.psykiatri-regionh.dk/f-act-team) (in Danish) or by scanning the QR code with your phone.



ADHD and addiction and/or harmful drug use

An ADHD brain runs at a high pace. This can sometimes benefit you and those around you. At other times, it can be unbearable, making it natural to turn to drugs or alcohol to numb the effects of a racing mind and body. You could call it self-medication.

Use of marijuana, ecstasy or alcohol can therefore become a major problem for many people with ADHD. Even Ritalin itself may potentially lead to abuse, both by yourself and others, which makes everything more complex. Having a mental illness combined with a drug addiction is also called a dual diagnosis.

Why are so many adults tested for ADHD?

Major increase in testing for ADHD

There has been a huge increase in the need to test adults for ADHD in recent years. From 200 to 1,500 in just a few years. There may be many reasons for that. For example, because your children have been diagnosed, you may like to be examined yourself. Another explanation could be that many symptoms of ADHD only come to light and start making life difficult for some people once they come up against the challenges of adult life.

High pace and digital world add to difficulties

Having ADHD can also be particularly demanding given the accelerating pace of modern life, the incessant bombardment of information and the constant changes happening in society. The endless possibilities for contact and activity offered by smart phones are also very bad in combination with ADHD, leading to racing thoughts and heightened agitation. They can also easily lead to abuse-like behaviour patterns.

Symptoms only become evident when you have to stand on your own two feet

Basically, this means that when the survival strategies you learned during childhood and adolescence to manage undiagnosed ADHD no longer work in adult life, you may suffer mentally. For example, you may develop anxiety, depression or an addiction, before it becomes clear that ADHD is at the root of your mental health problems. This is also why some people referred for testing for ADHD come from elsewhere in the mental health system, because underlying ADHD is suspected to be the cause of their mental health issues.

More knowledge and counselling

Psykiatriguiden – overview for patients and relatives

In Psykiatriguiden, we have gathered all relevant information about mental illnesses, types of treatment and treatment programmes offered by the mental health services of the Capital Region of Denmark. You can also read about being a relative of a person with ADHD.

[Find Psykiatriguiden \(in Danish\) at www.psykiatri-regionh.dk/psykiatriguiden](http://www.psykiatri-regionh.dk/psykiatriguiden) or by scanning the QR code with your phone.



Living with mental illness

[You can find specific tools designed to help you in your everyday life at www.psykiatri-regionh.dk/hverdagen](http://www.psykiatri-regionh.dk/hverdagen) (in Danish) or by scanning the QR code with your phone.



Counselling from PsykInfo

At PsykInfo in the Capital Region of Denmark, nurses with experience from the mental health services offer telephone or personal counselling to both patients and their relatives. [You can read more at www.psykiatri-regionh.dk/Psykinfo](http://www.psykiatri-regionh.dk/Psykinfo) (in Danish) or call 38 64 13 00. You can also scan the QR code with your phone.

