

ADHD Facts – Dispelling the Myths

- ADHD is a neurodevelopmental disorder that has been clinically observed for more than 200 years
- ADHD is the most prevalent childhood psychiatric disorder in Canada
- ADHD remains under-recognized and underdiagnosed even though it is the most treatable psychiatric disorder in Canada
- Overwhelming scientific evidence has led all major medical associations and government health agencies to recognize ADHD as a real medical disorder
- Children with ADHD are frequently labeled as problem children rather than children with a medical problem
- ADHD conservatively occurs in 4% of adults and 5% of children worldwide
- Scientific studies have shown that ADHD is highly heritable and is a chronic disorder that persists throughout the lifespan
- Eighty percent of children maintain their diagnosis into adolescence and at least 60% remain impaired by symptoms in adulthood
- There are three presentations of ADHD depending on which of the three core symptoms (inattention, hyperactivity and impulsivity) present:
 - Predominately inattentive (previously referred to as ADD)
 - Predominately hyperactive (very rare)
 - Combined (most prevalent)
- All regulation of attention is impaired in ADHD. Over-focusing can be as much of an issue as inattention. Prioritizing attention and breaking and shifting attention can all be impaired.
- Executive functioning impairment and mood dysregulation also impact many children and adults with ADHD
- Parenting does not cause ADHD, although specialized parents can assist with symptom impairment
- Diets and limiting food additives and sugar will not cure ADHD
- Treatment for ADHD should always be multi-modal
- Children, adolescents and adults with untreated ADHD are at a greater risk for:
 - Learning difficulties, less academic success, school dropout, and fewer years of schooling
 - Additional mental health disorders and problems with self esteem
 - Substance abuse and a greater chance of becoming involved in the justice system
 - More accidents and sustaining injuries, more automobile accidents and earlier death
- Current lack of knowledge, skills, and integrated services in health and education sectors pose major challenges for accessing effective treatments