

## Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

### What is ADHD?

Attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is a condition that affects an estimated 3 to 5 percent of children and often persists into adolescence and adulthood. The principal characteristics of ADHD are inattention, hyperactivity, and impulsivity.

### I think I might have ADHD, but I've never been diagnosed. What should I do?

Schedule an appointment with a **counselor** in the Counseling and Psychological Services (CPS) Department (3<sup>rd</sup> floor) of the University Health Services. You can drop by CPS or call 510.642.9494 to schedule an appointment. If appropriate, the CPS counselor can provide you with referrals to community specialists whose ADHD assessments meet the minimum standards required by UHS Psychiatry (see below).

### Why doesn't UHS offer assessments?

There is no one test to determine the presence of ADHD. Specialists need to do an in-depth evaluation that would include assessing for ADHD as well as other conditions that have symptoms in common with ADHD, such as depression, anxiety, substance abuse, and learning differences. This type of evaluation requires specialized experience and expertise and often involves a number of visits. UHS does not currently have the resources to provide these assessments.

### What does a diagnostic assessment include?

Although different clinicians will vary somewhat in their procedures and testing materials, certain protocols are considered essential for a comprehensive evaluation. A full diagnostic assessment for ADHD should include at a minimum the following:

- Interviews and questionnaires which allow you to describe current concerns and past problems.
- Interviews with significant people in your life (e.g. parents, teachers, employer, partner, friends, etc.) and/or questionnaires filled out by these people.
- Observations of your behavior.
- Complete developmental, educational, medical/psychiatric, substance use, and family histories. If you have received a prior diagnosis of ADHD, the documented history should include specific statements about the impact the illness has had on your life.
- An evaluation of the effectiveness of past and current medications prescribed for the ADHD symptoms.
- An evaluation of the effectiveness of behavioral interventions.
- Comprehensive Mental Status Examination.
- A summary of assessment findings.
- The DSM IV-TR multi-axial diagnoses (including the five axes) and date of diagnosis.
- Treatment Recommendations and Disposition Plan.

A specialist will know what all of this means!

Please note that tests of intelligence, cognition/information processing, and academic achievement, which may or may not be part of the diagnostic process itself, may be needed by the Disabled Students Program to determine appropriate accommodations and services.

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**What happens after I get diagnosed by a UHS-recommended ADHD community specialist?**

After a confirmed diagnosis of ADHD, you will be able to meet with a member of the UHS Psychiatry Service to discuss treatment options that might include medication.

**I was diagnosed with ADHD a while back but have never been treated for it. My roommate has ADHD and is being treated for it. What UHS services are available for us?**

UHS Psychiatry appointments are available for ADHD-related medication evaluations **after all** of your prior ADHD diagnostic assessment/treatment and other mental health records have been received, reviewed, and the referral to psychiatry has been approved by a UHS psychiatrist. It is your responsibility to arrange for all of your prior records to be forwarded to CPS for review; this involves making sure your previous health providers follow through with the forwarding of these records.

Prior ADHD diagnostic assessments should meet the same minimum standards outlined above. After reviewing past records, UHS may need to request updated or supplemental documentation on a case-by-case basis.

**Can a UHS physician or nurse practitioner start me on medication and/or refill my roommate's medication?**

UHS clinicians **cannot** initiate any ADHD medication treatment or refill ADHD prescriptions of outside providers until UHS Psychiatry has completed an ADHD-related medication evaluation. If you are already taking medication prescribed by outside providers, we strongly encourage you to continue working with them while you go through the steps to transfer your care to UHS.

Please keep in mind that a confirmed diagnosis of ADHD does not guarantee any specific type of medication or treatment. Medication and other treatment options, recommendations, preferences, and decisions can be discussed once you meet with a UHS psychiatrist.

**Why is there so much confusion around ADHD?**

First of all, not everyone who seems hyperactive, inattentive, or impulsive has ADHD. Also, since there are no consensus guidelines that define minimum standards for ADHD diagnostic assessments, there is a wide range in the breadth and depth of assessments performed in students diagnosed with ADHD prior to requesting treatment at UHS.

**All of our policies around ADHD are developed with your best interest and well-being in mind. The first step in the process is to make an appointment with a counselor in CPS, located on the third floor at UHS. Please drop by or call 510.642.9494 for an appointment.**

Suggested websites for more information on ADHD, including diagnostic assessment guidelines:

<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/adhd/complete-publication.shtml#pub3>

<http://www.help4adhd.org/treatment/guides/aacap>

Check our website: [www.uhs.berkeley.edu](http://www.uhs.berkeley.edu) to learn more about this medical concern or others  
For an appointment: [www.uhs.berkeley.edu](http://www.uhs.berkeley.edu) or call **510-642-2000** For advice call: Clinic Nurse **510-643-7197**