

General Adult ADD Symptom Checklist

I use the following general adult ADD checklist in my office to help diagnose ADD. No ADD adult has all of the symptoms, but if you notice more than 20 of these symptoms, there is a strong suspicion for it.

Please read this list of behaviors and rate yourself (or the person who has asked you to rate him or her) on each behavior listed. Use the following scale and place the appropriate number next to the item.

- 0 = never
- 1 = rarely
- 2 = occasionally
- 3 = frequently
- 4 = very frequently

Past History

- ___ 1. History of ADD symptoms in childhood, such as distractibility, short attention span, impulsivity or restlessness, ADD doesn't start at age 30.
- ___ 2. History of not living up to potential in school or work (report cards with comments such as "not living up to potential")
- ___ 3. History of frequent behavior problems in school (mostly for males)
- ___ 4. History of bedwetting past 5 years old
- ___ 5. Family history of ADD, learning problems, mood disorders or substance abuse problems.

Short Attention Span/Distractibility

- ___ 6. Short attention span, unless very interested in something
- ___ 7. Easily distracted, tendency to drift away (although at times can be hyperfocused)
- ___ 8. Lacks attention to detail, due to distractibility
- ___ 9. Trouble listening carefully to directions
- ___ 10. Frequently misplaces things
- ___ 11. Skips around while reading, or goes to the end first, trouble staying on track
- ___ 12. Difficulty learning new games, because it is hard to stay on track during directions
- ___ 13. Easily distracted during sex, causing frequent breaks or turn offs during lovemaking
- ___ 14. Poor listening skills
- ___ 15. Tendency to be easily bored (spaces out)

Restlessness

- ___ 16. Restlessness, constant motion, legs moving, fidgetiness
- ___ 17. Has to be moving in order to think
- ___ 18. Trouble sitting still, such as trouble sitting in one place for too long, sitting at a desk job for long periods of time, sitting through a movie
- ___ 19. An internal sense of anxiety or nervousness

Impulsivity

- ___ 20. Impulsive, in words and/or actions (spending)
- ___ 21. Say just what comes to mind without considering its impact (tactless)
- ___ 22. Trouble going through established channels, trouble following proper procedure, an attitude of “read the directions when all else fails”
- ___ 23. Impatient, low frustration tolerance
- ___ 24. A prisoner of the moment
- ___ 25. Frequent traffic violations
- ___ 26. Frequent, impulsive job changes
- ___ 27. Tendency to embarrass others
- ___ 28. Lying or stealing on impulse

Poor Organization

- ___ 29. Poor organization and planning, trouble maintaining an organized work/living area
- ___ 30. Chronically late or chronically in a hurry
- ___ 31. Often have piles of stuff
- ___ 32. Easily overwhelmed by tasks of daily living
- ___ 33. Poor financial management (late bills, check book a mess, spending unnecessary money on late fees)
- ___ 34. Some adults with ADD are very successful, but often only if they are surrounded with people who organize them

Problems Getting Started and Following Through

- ___ 35. Chronic procrastination or trouble getting started
- ___ 36. Starting projects not finished, poor follow through
- ___ 37. Enthusiastic beginnings, but poor endings
- ___ 38. Spends excessive time at work because of inefficiencies
- ___ 39. Inconsistent work performance

Negative Internal Feelings

- ___ 40. Chronic sense of underachievement, feeling you should be much further along in your life than you are
- ___ 41. Chronic problems with self esteem
- ___ 42. Mood swings
- ___ 43. Negativity
- ___ 44. Frequent feeling of demoralization or that things won't work out for you

Relational Difficulties

- ___ 45. Trouble sustaining friendships or intimate relationships, promiscuity
- ___ 46. Trouble with intimacy
- ___ 47. Tendency to be immature
- ___ 48. Self-centered; immature interests
- ___ 49. Failure to see others' needs or activities as important
- ___ 50. Lack of talking in a relationship
- ___ 51. Verbally abusive to others
- ___ 52. Proneness to hysterical outburst
- ___ 53. Avoids group activities
- ___ 54. Trouble with authority

Short Fuse

- ___ 55. Quick responses to slights that are real or imagines
- ___ 56. Rage outbursts, short fuse

Search For High Stimulation

- ___ 57. Frequent search for high stimulation (bungee jumping, gambling, race track, high stress jobs, ER doctors, doing many things at once, etc.)
- ___ 58. Tendency to seek conflict, be argumentative or to start disagreements for the fun of it

Tendency to Get Stuck (thoughts or behaviors)

- ___ 59. Tendency to worry needlessly and endlessly
- ___ 60. Tendency toward addictions (food, alcohol, drugs, work)

Switches Things Around

- ___ 61. Switches around numbers, letters or words
- ___ 62. Turn words around in conversations

Writing/Fine Motor Coordination Difficulties

- ___ 63. Poor writing skills (hard to get information from brain to pen)
- ___ 64. Poor handwriting, often prints
- ___ 65. Coordination difficulties

The Harder I Try, The Worse It Gets

- ___ 66. Performance becomes worse under pressure
- ___ 67. Test anxiety, or during tests your mind tends to go blank
- ___ 68. The harder you try, the worse it gets
- ___ 69. Work or schoolwork deteriorates under pressure
- ___ 70. Tendency to turn off or become stuck when asked questions in social questions in social situations
- ___ 71. Falls asleep or becomes tired when reading

Sleep/Wake Difficulties

72. Difficulties falling asleep, may be due to too many thoughts at night
73. Difficulty coming awake (may need coffee or other activity before feeling fully awake)

Low Energy

74. Periods of low energy, especially early in the morning and in the afternoon
75. Frequently feeling tired

Sensitive to Noise or Touch

76. Startles easily
77. Sensitive to touch, clothes, noise and light

Total Score: _____ (more than 20 with a score of three or more indicates a strong tendency towards ADD (Items 1, 6, and 7 are essential to make the diagnosis))