Evaluation and Treatment for Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

How is Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder diagnosed?

- Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder includes a predominantly inattentive type, a predominantly hyperactive type, or a combined type. It is commonly referred to as ADD or ADHD. We use the general term “ADHD” in this document to refer to any of these three types of disorders.
- ADHD is more complicated to diagnose than many other psychiatric disorders. There is not a specific test that can determine the diagnosis. Rather, diagnosis is made by taking a comprehensive history over time, including input from significant others and formal written or computer assessments.
- Diagnosis is likely to take some time and money but can be worth it if you have been struggling with symptoms that are affecting your performance in school and other areas of your life. Other conditions may have symptoms that look like ADHD or occur along with it. A thorough assessment can help find those other disorders as well.

I have not been diagnosed, how can I be tested for ADHD?

- If you are looking for formal ADHD testing to determine whether you have an ADHD, you can schedule an appointment with a psychologist in the community. If you are diagnosed with ADHD, then the provider who makes the diagnosis may be able to provide some treatment and make additional referrals.
- See the CAPS Community Provider Database (https://elections.psu.edu/caps-cpd/) and search under Testing-Psychological, Testing-Neuropsychological or Learning Disorder Assessment for specific providers. Make sure to check with your health insurance company to see: 1) whether they cover testing, 2) what the coverage is for, 3) which providers they cover.

Does CAPS do testing for ADHD?

CAPS is not able to honor specific requests for ADHD testing and does not perform the extensive evaluations required to assess qualification for academic accommodations. From time to time in the context of other counseling work, a counselor at CAPS may recommend a brief screening for ADHD which can help a current CAPS client know if further testing is warranted.

Does CAPS provide treatment for ADHD?

As described on our website, CAPS provides short-term mental health treatment. ADHD is a developmental disorder that may persist into adulthood, thus requiring long-term care. Unfortunately CAPS does not have the resources to provide treatment for many students needing long-term treatment for ADHD or other mental disorders. CAPS does provide some short-term treatment which may include medication for students who are determined in the course of treatment at CAPS to suffer from ADHD.

I have already been diagnosed, how do I receive medication?

- Previous Provider: If you are already being prescribed medication by a provider at home, consider asking if they would be willing to continue to manage the medication if you schedule visits when you are home over breaks.

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I have already been diagnosed, how do I receive medication? (cont.)

- **University Health Services (UHS):** If you have never been prescribed medication or if continuing with a previous provider is **not** possible AND you have been **tested and have a formal report by a qualified provider**, then a provider in UHS may be willing to prescribe a medication for ADHD. This may be possible if ADHD is your only mental health disorder. To find out if a UHS provider can treat you, call UHS at 814-863-0774, tell them your diagnosis and that you have an assessment report and you will be scheduled with the Case Manager to assess your eligibility.

- **Local Psychiatric Provider:** If you have not had formal testing and/or you have another mental health disorder that needs treatment (i.e., depression or anxiety) then it would be best to seek care from a psychiatric provider in the community.

- In addition to medication, it is usually best to work with a therapist on behavioral strategies when first being treated for ADHD.

- See the CAPS Community Provider Database and the handout ([http://www.sa.psu.edu/caps/pdf/SettingUpCare.pdf](http://www.sa.psu.edu/caps/pdf/SettingUpCare.pdf)) for information on how to schedule with a provider and work with your health insurance.

I have been diagnosed with ADHD. How do I get assistance with my class work?

- **Office of Disability Services, 116 Boucke Building, 863-1807.** If **academic accommodations** have been recommended or you want to find out if you may qualify then either schedule an appointment at the Office of Disability Services or review their website at [http://www.equity.psu.edu/ods/](http://www.equity.psu.edu/ods/). It provides some basic information and documentation guidelines for all disability categories. This process usually takes some time and requires thorough evaluation and documentation.

- **Penn State Learning, 102 Wagner Building, 865-1841,** [http://pennstatelearning.psu.edu/](http://pennstatelearning.psu.edu/)

- Check with your local College or department to see if other tutoring options are available.

How can I find out more about ADHD?

**Websites:**


- ADDA (Attention Deficit Disorder Association) [http://www.add.org](http://www.add.org)

- AHEAD (Association on Higher Education and Disability) [http://www.ahead.org](http://www.ahead.org)

- CHADD (Children and Adults with Attention Deficit Disorder) [http://www.chadd.org](http://www.chadd.org)

**Books:**


Are there low cost options for testing or treatment of ADHD?

Options to pay for testing are limited but you may qualify for help through one of the following:

- **Office of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (OVR), 1130 12th Ave., Suite 500, Altoona, PA 16601 814-946-7240; OVR Office at PSU, 814-865-0331.** [http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/vocational_rehabilitation/10356](http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/vocational_rehabilitation/10356)

- **Veterans Administration (VA), Altoona VA Hospital: 877-626-2500.** State College VA Clinic: 3048 Enterprise Drive, (814) 867-5415. Services are available if you are a veteran.

- **Centre County Mental Health Base Service Unit, 420 Holmes Street, Bellefonte, PA 16823,** (814) 355-6782