

ADULT ADD: THE DIAGNOSIS

When you see a clinician for an ADHD diagnosis, come prepared. Harold Meyer, director of the New York City chapter of CHADD, offers the tips below.

DESCRIBE YOUR PROBLEMS IN DETAIL. Figure out what concerns you want to address in your consultation. For instance: "At work, I find that I can't stay on task or complete projects." "I can't find anything at home!" "I'm late for appointments."

CONSIDER YOUR STANCE ON MEDICATION. If you're opposed to taking medication, state your philosophy up-front and ask your doctor if he can recommend other treatment options. If he still insists on writing a prescription, don't be afraid to see someone else. If you decide on medication, remember that the prescription process varies with the individual. It's likely that you'll need to try more than one brand and experiment with different dosages before finding one that works for you.

ASK THE DOCTOR TO TALK ABOUT NEEDS. You want someone who will not just write a prescription, but who will also discuss, in detail, the diagnosis and treatment with you. The following questions should be addressed: "What medications are under consideration? Why start with a particular medication?" "What can you expect to happen? How should you evaluate the effect of the medication?"

DISCUSS FOLLOW-UP. Your doctor should lay out a course of action, including treatment and follow-up appointments. Make sure that he's accessible. You'll need to talk with him on the phone in the weeks following the diagnosis as you work to find the right medication dosage. Will he be available? Will he charge you to consult? Will he prescribe medication refills by phone, or do you need to go to his office?

LEARN ABOUT ALTERNATIVES TO MEDICATION. Find out about behavioral and other therapies you might try. Can your doctor work with you on these? Is your doctor sympathetic to non-medical treatment? You may benefit from a referral to a psychologist or coach who can offer behavioral help—ways to deal with organization problems at work and home.

ASK IF HE WILL MEET WITH YOUR FAMILY. A diagnosis of ADHD affects those you live with. Your spouse and children need to learn about the condition and how you will manage it. In fact, people with ADHD are not good at observing their own behavior, so it's best to have someone close to you monitor your behavior while on medication and let you know if they notice any changes.

FINDING AN ADHD SPECIALIST
The following organizations offer free directories of ADHD professionals:
ADDDoc: <http://directory.adddocmag.com>
CHADD: chadd.org
ADD Consults: addconsults.com/professional-directory
ADD Resources: addresources.org/add_directory.php



www.additudemag.com/adult-diagnosis.html