



Duke Center for Girls & Women
with ADHD

Newsletter

Winter 2024



"Spontaneity," by Ella from Georgia

"Where impulsivity might be seen in a negative light, *spontaneity* is associated with joy. Joy and excitement and lust for living, spontaneity is a beautiful thing that I think many people with ADHD embody," says Ella.

Read more about the inspiration for this piece on the Center's [social media](#).

Want to see *your* artwork featured in a future newsletter? Send us pictures of your art that capture the essence of ADHD's impact on your life. Paint, sculpture, digital, or any other media are welcome!

Email us at ADHDGirls@duke.edu for more information.



Happy holidays to the girls, women, families, friends, health care providers, educators, researchers, and other supporters who make up our vibrant community!

Consider an End-of-Year Donation to Help Support the Center

Now is a perfect time to support women's health! The Center receives the majority of its funding through private philanthropy from individuals and foundations.

Read [this recent article](#) about our primary donor with comments from Center Co-Director Dr. Julia Schechter to learn about the inspiration for the Center and the critical role philanthropy plays in our work.

We invite you to partner with us through a one-time or recurring donation.

Your contribution directly supports key initiatives and increases our ability to make a transformative difference for girls and women with ADHD and their families.

Click the button below to learn how you can make an impact!

DONATE TODAY!

Presenting the Patient-Centered Research Priorities to the Research Community

In October, Dr. Julia Schechter and Center Associate Director, Dr. Jennifer Gierisch traveled to Washington D.C. to

present findings on the top research priorities for women with ADHD at the [Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute \(PCORI\) annual meeting](#). The meeting brought together PCORI-funded researchers to address health-related questions by engaging with patients, their families, and other community partners through all stages of research.



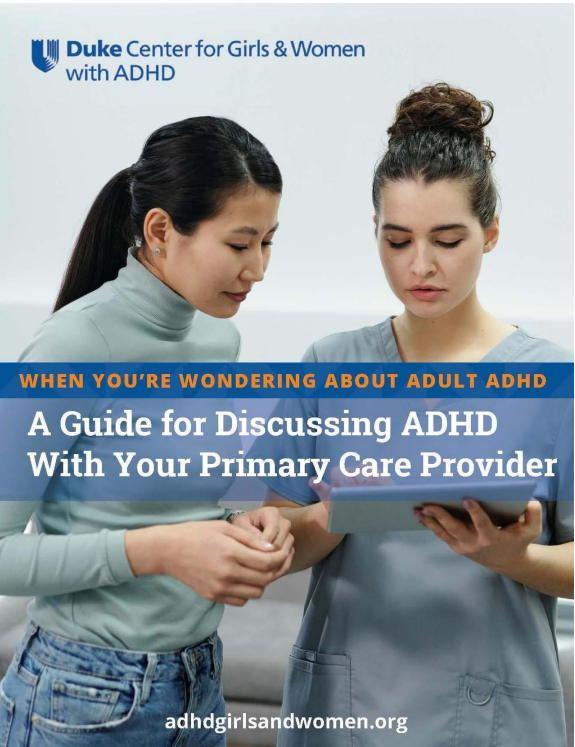
New Tools Available on the Center’s Website!


We are excited to share two new resources for women with ADHD and their providers:


[FOR PATIENTS](#)

[FOR PROVIDERS](#)

How to talk with your provider about ADHD
Navigating the perinatal period with ADHD



NC MATTERS

Duke Center for Girls & Women
with ADHD

ADHD in Women: Implications for Treatment in the Perinatal Period

KEY FACTS

- ADHD is one of the most common neurodevelopmental disorders, and symptoms typically extend across the lifespan¹
- Though historically underdiagnosed in girls and women,² women are now as likely to be diagnosed with ADHD in adulthood as men.³ The current ADHD prevalence for all adults is 4.4%.⁴
- Untreated or unmanaged ADHD symptoms are associated with a range of impairments in adulthood and during the perinatal period, including higher rates of unplanned pregnancies,⁵ poorer prenatal health,⁶ and increased birth complications.⁷
- As more adult women are receiving ADHD diagnoses, many are seeking support for managing their symptoms during preconception and the perinatal period (i.e., pregnancy and postpartum).

In this document, the term "woman" is intended to include all people who identify as female or were assigned female at birth.

BACKGROUND

What is ADHD?⁸

- A brain-based disorder that is characterized by levels of inattention and/or hyperactivity/impulsivity that are greater than what would be expected for a person's age or developmental level.
- For individuals aged 17 years and older to meet criteria for ADHD, a person must exhibit at least 5 symptoms of inattention or hyperactivity/impulsivity. See table below for symptoms.

- Several symptoms must have been present in childhood (i.e., younger than age 12).
- Symptoms must be persistent for at least 6 months and occur across multiple settings.
- Symptoms cannot be better explained by other factors, such as another mental health condition (e.g., depression, anxiety, psychosis, etc.).
- To meet criteria for an ADHD diagnosis, symptoms must be associated with functional impairment. ADHD can contribute to a range of significant challenges including social and emotional difficulties, academic underachievement, financial hardships,⁹ employment challenges,¹⁰ and premature death.¹¹

INATTENTION	HYPERACTIVITY AND IMPULSIVITY
Trouble paying attention to details/makes careless mistakes	Fidgeting
Trouble sustaining attention	Trouble staying seated when expected
Seems to not be listening	Often feeling or seeming restless
Trouble following instructions/finishing tasks	Trouble engaging in tasks quietly
Difficulty organizing	"On the go" or "driven by a motor"
Avoiding tasks that require concentration	Talking excessively
Losing materials	Blurts out answers to questions before they are completed
Easily distracted	Trouble waiting turn
Forgetful	Interrupting/intruding on others

Are you an adult wondering if you might have ADHD? Have you considered bringing up ADHD with your doctor, but aren't sure how to best communicate your concerns in a short office visit? Check out our new [Guide for Discussing ADHD With Your Primary Care Provider](#)! The guide outlines what to expect during your appointment, includes a notes section to organize your thoughts, and lists questions to ask your doctor.

The Center partnered with [NC MATTERS](#) to create [ADHD in Women: Implications for Treatment in the Perinatal Period](#)—a guide for providers working with pregnant and postpartum women diagnosed or suspected of having ADHD. This toolkit provides information on topics such as: unique symptom presentations, how to determine if an ADHD evaluation is needed, and what is known about medication during pregnancy.

Thank You to Our Champions Circle for Sharing Your Voices!

In honor of ADHD Awareness Month in October, we asked members of our [Champions Circle for Girls and Women with ADHD](#) to share experiences of living with ADHD, thriving with ADHD, and loving someone with ADHD. Here are two of the many thoughtful responses we received:

In what ways has
ADHD impacted
your life



“ It is a ‘both/and’ because it is both such an incredible gift that allows me to see things others cannot but it is also an incredible burden that has to constantly be managed and tended to. ”

—Woman with ADHD, who is a parent of child with ADHD, and a mental health provider

In what ways has the
Duke Center for Girls
and Women with ADHD
impacted your life



“ It is a safe place, where I don’t feel like I have to defend or justify my actions. I don’t feel so alone. And, it helps me realize that I am not a total failure, just because I don’t handle things the way that ‘normal’ women do. ”

—Woman with ADHD

Stay tuned on social media as we continue to elevate your voices!

Not already a Champion’s Circle member? [Sign up](#) or [learn more.](#)

Connect with us!



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