

# — Women and ADHD —

## Young boys often are most often diagnosed with disorder

By **DREW DAKESSIAN**  
Pamplin Media Group

For most people, the term “ADHD” calls to mind a fidgety, outspoken 7-year-old boy. But a less-discussed population is impacted by this disorder, too: adult women.

### Delayed diagnosis

Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, known as ADHD, is one of the most commonly diagnosed neurobehavioral disorders of childhood.

Boisterous, loud and seemingly incapable of sitting still, boys with ADHD are often easy to spot. According to results of a phone survey conducted by The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s National Center for Health Statistics in 2007, boys were more than twice as likely as girls to have ever been diagnosed with ADHD. Once diagnosed, they receive treatment in the form of behavior modification therapy and medications such as Ritalin or Adderall, which are thought to temporarily reduce symptoms by increasing the amounts of certain natural

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— **Esther Freeman,**  
clinical psychologist

substances in the brain like the neurotransmitter dopamine.

Unlike her male counterpart, a girl with ADHD may have less trouble staying seated in her desk and more trouble actually getting anything accomplished. By not doing anything physically unusual to call attention to herself, her symptoms of inattention are liable to go unnoticed by her teacher, her pediatrician or even her parents.

For that reason, a girl may be well into her adult life before finding out that the reason she is so disorganized, socially awkward or perpetually late could be due to a clinical problem with her neurological makeup.

like you do.”

In many cases, the women who come to Freeman thinking they are ‘just no good,’ and haven’t even considered the possibility that they might have clinical ADHD, are the ones that actually do.

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For women who have gone untreated for so many years, that delayed diagnosis is a godsend.

“If a woman hasn’t been diagnosed early, just a man has, then they can have a lot of failures,” Freeman explains. “Their self-esteem would be tied to their failures at school, at work, and they think it has to do with their intelligence or ability, but really it has more to do with their inattention and difficulty maintaining attention, and ... when they can be properly diagnosed and treated, it can be really helpful.”

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# EASING *the* STRESS

*Identifying five ways to cope with the stressors of life*

By DREW DAKESSIAN  
Pamplin Media Group

Women certainly do have their work cut out for them in modern-day society: A record 40 percent of all households with minor-age children include mothers who are either the sole or primary source of income for the family, according to Pew Research Center analysis of data from the U.S. Census Bureau that was released earlier this year.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, women report higher stress levels than men, according to the American Psychological Association.

"Women can face some unique stress in society for sure," says Nicole Cirino, director of Women's Mental Health and Wellness at Oregon Health & Science University's Center

for Women's Health. "Women are particularly susceptible to trauma — for instance, they're more likely to have been victims of domestic violence or abuse, assault, or rape, so they're more likely to have bad things happen to them."

"Because of their vulnerable position in society, I also notice that women are often affected more adversely by divorce or other societal issues," Cirino continues. "Balancing parenting with working and other stressors ... women often have to face it either alone or with minimal support."

While more than 80 percent of women believe that stress impacts overall health, what they might not realize is that it works both ways: the healthier we are, the less stressed we feel.

"Part of stress relief," Cirino says, "is maintaining some kind of healthy habits."



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## So, what specifically can women do to reduce stress?

Here are Nicole Cirino's tried-and-true tips for trouncing tension.

### 1. Get moving and eat right

"When you exercise, you actually are enhancing your body's ability to handle stress," Cirino says. "This doesn't have to be intense exercise — just regular, daily, 30 minutes of activity — be it walking, mild aerobic activity or other events."

### 2. Talk to friends

"Women are also particularly good — better than men — at using social support in handling stress," Cirino says.

And it turns out they're right on track. Research shows that engaging in social interaction stimulates the production of the hormone oxytocin, which enhances relaxation and reduces fearfulness.

So meeting a friend for coffee or cocktails to commiserate about your lives isn't just a fun way to pass the time, it's salvation.

### 3. Consider psychotherapy

"We learned early on that if we have some control over the stress, we're much more able to deal with the stress," Cirino explains. "We teach people that even though you can't change things like a difficult mother-in-law or a difficult boss, often our perception of ... how to take control of some parts of the situation that you can control has been really helpful to manage stress. You can do that through psychotherapy."

### 4. Look into alternative therapies

Through its Neurology Wellness Clinic, the OHSU Brain Institute offers stress management practices including breathing techniques, meditation, yoga, tai chi and qi gong. Another method that Cirino recommends is mindfulness.

### 5. Put yourself first

Often expected to be both the breadwinners and the bread bakers, modern women confront being responsible for what seems like everyone and everything, and that can cause no small amount of stress.

Unfortunately, according to Cirino, "Stress can lead to an increased incidence of conditions such as obesity, cardiovascular disease, pain syndrome and depression."

So even though "a lot of women — especially (married) moms, since they take care of their spouse and their children — tend to forget to make their own medical or dental appointments for routine care," Cirino says, "Seeking medical care to treat those conditions is going to, obviously, help with your stress."

# Living with diabetes: EXERCISE *and* a HEALTHY DIET

By DREW DAKESSIAN  
Pamplin Media Group

Every 17 seconds, someone is diagnosed with diabetes, the seventh leading cause of death in the United States and the leading cause of blindness, kidney malfunction and non-traumatic amputations.

What exactly is diabetes? Let's start with the basics.

Type 1 diabetes is believed to be an autoimmune disease in which the body's immune system attacks the beta cells in the pancreas that produce insulin, a hormone needed to move blood sugar, or glucose, into cells, where it is stored and later used for energy. People with Type 1 must control the levels of glucose in their blood by taking insulin through regular shots or an insulin pump and following a diet and exercising.

Previously known as juvenile-onset diabetes, Type 1 is most often diagnosed in children, adolescents or young adults.

**"In Oregon the incidence of diabetes is not as high as it is in other parts of the country,"**

— Don Kain, registered dietician and diabetes educator, OHSU

do not respond correctly (insulin resistance). This prevents blood sugar from getting into the cells and causes high levels of glucose to build up in the bloodstream. This condition, known as hyperglycemia, results in damage to the body and dehydration, which in turn can bring about a diabetic coma.

In addition to the two main types of diabetes, a third type exists in the form of gestational diabetes, high blood sugar that starts or is diagnosed during pregnancy.

According to the NIHA, you are at greater risk for gestational diabetes if you are older than 25 when pregnant; have a family history of diabetes; gave birth to a baby that weighed more than nine pounds or had a birth defect; have high blood pressure; have too much amniotic fluid; have had an unexplained miscarriage or stillbirth; or were



DREAMSTIME PHOTO

overweight before pregnancy.

"Gestational diabetes is more a Type 2-like condition because it's insulin resistant," Kain said. "The body's still making insulin, but if you don't have the classic risk factors for Type 2 diabetes, around somewhere between Week 24 and Week 28 of the pregnancy, they'll administer an oral glucose tolerance test."

Diabetes is associated with myriad risk factors.

"A lot of bad stuff can happen if diabetes is not paid attention to," said Don Kain, a registered dietician and diabetes educator with the Harold Schnitzer Diabetes Center at Oregon Health & Science University. "The good news is that if you pay attention to it and manage it, none of that stuff has to happen."

The American Diabetes Association notes that in many people, the development of Type 1 diabetes seems to take many years. In Type 1, an acute infection causes the body to make autoantibodies, proteins that attack that mistakenly attack the body's beta cells. Once destroyed, beta cells cannot be rebuilt.

Type 2 diabetes, meanwhile, is associated with diet and lifestyle. While physical

activity uses up glucose as energy and makes your cells more sensitive to insulin, according to the Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research, the more fatty tissue you have, the more resistant your cells are to insulin. Your risk of Type 2 is also greater if your body stores fat primarily in your abdomen.

"Diabetes is kind of exploding, especially in the United States," Kain said, "and it kind of mirrors the obesity epidemics."

Hispanics, African Americans, American Indians, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and are more likely to develop Type 2 diabetes than Whites, who have the highest rate of Type 1.

And, Kain noted, "The older you are, the more at risk you are for developing diabetes."

Both types of diabetes are becoming increasingly prevalent, especially in the South.

"Mississippi, Alabama, Louisiana ... my opinion is that it's the type of diet that's consumed down there. People don't vegetables; they eat fried vegetables."

"In Oregon the incidence of diabetes is not as high as it is in other parts of the country," Kain said, "but it's growing in Oregon as well."

According to United Health Foundation rankings from 2011, "In the past five years, diabetes increased from 6.7 percent to 7.2 percent of adults. Now 213,000 Oregon adults have diabetes."

Results of a joint study by the CDC and the National Institutes of Health revealed that the prevalence of Type 2 increased 21 percent among American youth from 2001 to 2009, while Type 1 rose 23 percent.

The medical community agrees that it is absolutely essential for young people, especially the children of women who are obese or have Type 2 diabetes, get regular exercise and make healthy food choices.

## Causes and symptoms of diabetes

Diabetes is caused by the way your body makes or uses insulin, which is necessary for the body to move sugar from the bloodstream and into muscle, fat and liver cells, where it can be used for energy.

### TYPE 1 DIABETES

With this type of diabetes, most frequently diagnosed in children, teenagers or young adults, the body makes little or no insulin.

While the exact cause is unknown, experts suspect it stems from an autoimmune disorder, with an infection or some other trigger causing the body to attack insulin-producing cells, according to the National Institutes of Health.

Genetics, likely, also plays a role. According to the American Diabetes Association, in most cases, someone with Type 1 diabetes inherited risk factors from both parents. Environmental triggers and early diet may also play roles. For instance, Type 1 diabetes develops more often in the wintertime than in the summer, and it's more common in cold climates, according to ADA. Studies also have shown Type 1 diabetes is less common among people who were breastfed as infants.

### Symptoms

- Extreme thirst
- Hunger
- Fatigue or irritability
- Weight loss
- Frequent urination

### TYPE 2 DIABETES

Type 2 diabetes occurs when someone's fat, liver and muscle cells don't respond the way they should to insulin. When this happens, sugar in the bloodstream can't get into cells where it would otherwise be stored for energy, and so sugar begins to build up in the blood.

Increased body fat contributes to the development of Type 2 diabetes, although the disease can emerge in thin people as well, particularly if they're elderly, according to NIH.

Type 2 diabetes is more closely linked to family history and lineage. Genetics and lifestyle play strong roles in the disease's development. Obesity tends to run in families, as do eating and exercise habits. Sedentary lifestyles, unhealthy diets and too much fat around the waistline all increase a person's risk for Type 2 diabetes, according to ADA.

### Symptoms

- Any of the Type 1 diabetes symptoms
- Frequent or recurring infections, including skin and bladder infections
- Blurred vision
- Slow-to-heal cuts and bruises
- Tingling sensations, pain or numbness in the feet or hands

— Kara Hansen Murphy

— Sources: A.D.A.M. Medical Encyclopedia via MedlinePlus, a National Institutes of Health website; American Diabetes Association.

### Upcoming diabetes events:

■ **Circle on the Court:** the kick-off event for the Pacific Northwest Diabetes Health & Wellness Week. The event takes place Nov. 10 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Rose Garden Arena and is free to the public. It's a day dedicated to bringing awareness and education to our community about living a healthy and active life.

■ **5th Annual Pacific Northwest Diabetes Summit:** a program for both types of diabetes on Nov. 17. There is no cost to attend the program, but you must preregister.