

The 3 Causes of ADHD

Having an adolescent with ADHD can be frustrating, heartbreaking, and entertaining--sometimes all at once. She's a smart kid, but Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, also known as ADHD, makes it hard for her to put her potential into practice. There are three causes of ADHD symptoms: genetics, biology, and chemistry. Learning about these causes helps parents understand that these behaviors are not intentional.



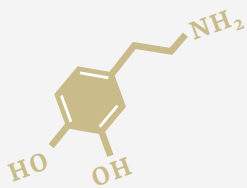
1. GENETIC CAUSES OF ADHD: IT'S NOT HER, IT'S YOU

Ninety percent of people with ADHD have inherited it from one or both parents. The other ten percent with ADHD have suffered a traumatic brain injury or had an illness that affected the brain.



2. BIOLOGICAL CAUSES OF ADHD: THE CURIOUS INFLUENCES OF THE FRONTAL LOBE

Children with ADHD have a frontal lobe that is developing slower than their peers'. This affects her ability to plan ahead, make decisions, and learn from the past. It's also instrumental in understanding cause and effect, changing habits, long-term memory, and reading social cues.



3. CHEMICAL CAUSES OF ADHD: WHAT'S DOPAMINE GOT TO DO WITH IT?

She is also dealing with the complications of dopamine deficiency in the brain. Dopamine works in conjunction with the basal ganglia--the part of the brain that regulates movement¹. Dopamine deficiency in ADHD usually results in uncoordinated movements. In order to boost dopamine levels, the brain will frequently change tasks to experience a feeling of accomplishment.

Dopamine is also the brain's reward center. When you eat your favorite food, for example, dopamine levels rise and you feel happy. Since this chemical is diminished in ADHD, she's not going to feel much "reward" from her favorite snack. That means she's likely to do risky behaviors to increase dopamine to levels she can feel. And they feel good.

SHE HAS TO LEARN IT, NOT "GET IT"

Individuals with ADHD have a slower learning curve, and patience is key to helping them grow. She can't be expected to just "get it" because her parents explained it, or because she had a relevant experience. It can be frustrating as a parent to watch a child repeatedly make mistakes, yet allowing her time is how she will learn. Sometimes this process can be quick, and other times it could take months. But with every experience, she is learning, and that's what matters most.

¹ Mandal, MD Dr Ananya. "Dopamine Functions." *News-Medical.net*. 27 Oct. 2015. Web. 20 June 2017. (<http://www.news-medical.net/health/Dopamine-Functions.aspx>)