

# Oral Health Fact Sheet for Medical Professionals

## Children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

*Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder is a behavior disorder with developmentally inappropriate inattention, impulsivity, and hyperactivity. (ICD 9 code 314.01)*

### Oral Manifestations and Considerations

#### Oral

- Decreased attention span → poor oral hygiene raises potential for increased caries
- Bruxism
- High risk for dental/oral trauma

#### Other Potential Disorders/Concerns

- Oppositional defiant
- Obsessive-compulsive
- Anxiety
- Conduct
- Tic
- Mood (anxiety, depression, bipolar)

### Oral Side Effects of Commonly Prescribed Medications

#### Medication:

- Prescribed based on symptoms for their intended purpose or used off label for associated conditions.
- Some children will go on medication “holidays” during times when they are not in school. Ask if a child has taken medication, and avoid treatment during periods when child is off normal meds.

| <b>SYMPTOM</b>       | <b>MEDICATION</b>   | <b>SIDE EFFECTS</b>  |
|----------------------|---|--|
| Generalized          | <i>Stimulants</i> (Ritalin, Adderall)<br><i>Atomoxetine</i> (Strattera) | Xerostomia, dysgeusia, bruxism<br>Xerostomia   |
| Repetitive Behaviors | <i>Antidepressants</i> (Wellbutrin, Tofranil)                           | Xerostomia, dysgeusia, stomatitis,<br>gingivitis, glossitis, sialadenitis,<br>bruxism, dysphagia, discolored<br>tongue, and oral edema |
| Hyperactivity        | <i>Antihypertensive</i> (Clonidine, Tenex)                              | Xerostomia, dysphagia, sialadenitis,<br>dysgeusia  |

# Children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder continued

## Parent/Caregiver Support and Guidance

- Discourage consumption of cariogenic foods and beverages.
- Prescribe sugar-free medications if available.
- Recommend preventive measures such as topical fluoride and sealants.
- Advise the use of fluoridated toothpaste twice daily and support the family in following dental care instructions
- Instruct caregiver on appropriate protocol following dental trauma (locate/preserve missing tooth and put in cold milk; seek immediate professional care).
- Recommend rinsing the mouth with water after each dose, especially after taking medications that cause xerostomia.
- Review safety issues appropriate to the age of the child, such as mouth guards to prevent oral-facial trauma.
- Refer to dentist any oral developmental abnormalities.

**Additional information:** [Special Needs Fact Sheets for Providers and Caregivers](#)

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## References

- Bimstein, E., Wilson, J., Guelmann, M., Primosch, R. (2008) Oral characteristics of children with attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder. *Special Care Dentistry*, 28(3): 107-110
- Blomqvist, M., Holmberg, K., Fernell, E., Ek, U., Dahllof, G. (2006) Oral health, dental anxiety, and behavior management problems in children with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. *European Journal of Oral Sciences*, 114: 385-390

## Additional Resources

- [NIH Institute for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder](#)
- [Special Care: an Oral Health Professionals Guide to Serving Young Children with Special Health Care Needs](#)
- [Bright Futures Oral Health Pocket Guide](#)
- [American Academy of Pediatrics Oral Health Initiative](#)
- [American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry: 2011–2012 Definitions, Oral Health Policies and Clinical Guidelines](#)
- [MCH Resource Center](#)
- [ASTDD-Special Needs](#)
- [Block Oral Disease, MA](#)
- [NOHIC-NIDCR publications](#)



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