

Diagnosis

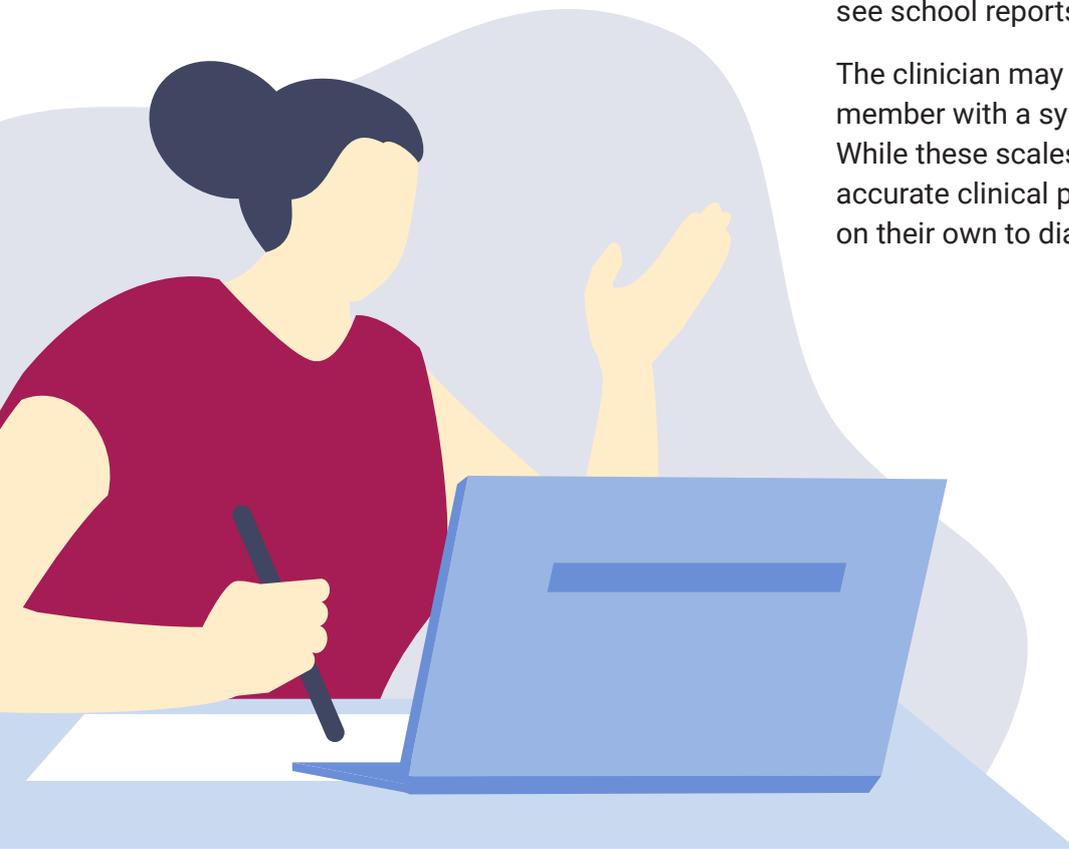
To be diagnosed with ADHD, you or your family member need to be assessed by a trained and credentialed clinician, such as a paediatrician, psychiatrist or psychologist, that is registered with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA). This clinician should be trained in diagnostic assessments and be experienced in the area of ADHD.

During the assessment, the clinician **should** seek to obtain a full developmental, mental health and medical history, as well as complete:

- A full clinical and psychosocial assessment that includes questions about ADHD symptoms and personal strengths, and how these present in different life settings. They will also ask questions about how much ADHD symptoms impact or disrupt everyday functioning.
- A medical assessment to exclude other causes of the symptoms and to identify if any associated conditions that also require investigation, intervention and support are present

The clinician **should** also obtain information from other people, such as teachers, parents, partners, friends or work colleagues, to ensure they gain an accurate picture of you or your family member's presentation. They may also ask whether ADHD runs in your family and request to see school reports.

The clinician may also provide you or your family member with a symptom rating scale to complete. While these scales can be helpful for obtaining an accurate clinical picture, they should not be used on their own to diagnose ADHD.



Important information to share

Some groups of people are at higher risk of having ADHD. Please inform the clinician completing the ADHD assessment if you or your family member fall into one of the at-risk groups listed on page 9 of this Consumer Companion.

There are also a number of co-occurring conditions that can present similarly to, or exacerbate, ADHD symptoms such as:

- Hearing or vision impairment
- Thyroid disease
- Anaemia

Some medications used to treat other health conditions can also cause side effects such as:

- Cognitive dulling (e.g., mood stabilisers)
- Psychomotor activation (e.g., decongestants, asthma medication, non-prescribed stimulants like caffeine)

If you or your family member has one of these conditions or takes any of the medications listed above, it is important that you inform the clinician undertaking the assessment.

Meeting the criteria for diagnosis

To be diagnosed with ADHD you or your family member must meet the diagnostic criteria set out in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM)-5, or another authoritative diagnostic manual (e.g., the ICD-10 or ICD-11).

The DSM-5 diagnostic criteria states that:

- Children up to the age of 16 must display 6 or more inattentive and/or hyperactivity-impulsivity symptoms
- Adolescents and adults (17 years and over) must display 5 or more inattentive and/or hyperactivity-impulsivity symptoms

These symptoms must also be:

- Excessive for one's developmental age
- Present before the age of 12
- Persist for longer than 6 months
- Interfere with function or development in more than one setting (i.e., home, school, child care, university, work, relationships, etc.)
- Not better explained by another condition or disorder (i.e., co-occurring physical and mental health/neurodevelopmental disorders such as autism, conduct or other mental disorders or physical or cognitive differences)