



What are the risk factors for people with ADHD during the coronavirus pandemic?

The biggest concerns for adolescents and young adults with ADHD during COVID-19 are **social isolation, motivation problems, and difficulties engaging** in online work or schooling. These risk factors create a perfect storm for the **onset of depression, school dropout, or work underperformance.**

Emerging studies from the COVID-19 pandemic show that **ADHD symptom severity appears to be increasing** during this global event. Several factors may be to blame. First, **students with ADHD must adjust** to low-structure, online learning platforms. These school environments demand **more self-discipline** than regular school, which can make concentration and motivation very challenging. For older high school and

college students with ADHD, **disengaging from virtual school may pave a slippery path** towards formal dropout. **Warning signs** include **a build-up of missing work, avoiding virtual class meetings, and slipping grades.**

Second, **social isolation is a known consequence of COVID-19** and is a risk factor for depression and suicide. During COVID-19, social isolation may be **particularly severe for people with ADHD**, who often have few close friends or may have trouble getting motivated to set-up social activities. On top of this concern, **increased ADHD symptoms can be triggered by high stress situations.**

COVID-19 brings stressors that include safety concerns, economic hardship, and increased family conflict during confinement. In addition to worsening ADHD symptoms, **ongoing stress**

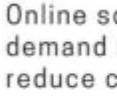
ADHD
AWARENESS MONTH
OCTOBER 2020

*COMMON QUESTIONS
RELIABLE ANSWERS*

What are the risk factors during the coronavirus pandemic for ADHD?



Social isolation may be particularly severe for people with ADHD, who often have few close friends or may have trouble getting motivated to set up social activities.



Online school and work environments demand more self-discipline, which can reduce concentration and motivation.





High stress situations (such as safety concerns, economic hardship, or increased family conflict during confinement) can trigger increased severity of ADHD symptoms and create risks for depression.

To best cope with COVID-19, individuals with ADHD and their family members can ensure academic support, prioritize social interaction, practice stress reduction behaviors, and reach out to mental health providers early on.



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Information adapted from Dr. Margaret Sibley

exposure can also create risks for depression. To prevent these concerns, individuals with ADHD and their family members can:

1. ensure that **proper academic supports** are in place at school,
2. **prioritize social interaction** (even if it means getting creative) during COVID-19,
3. **practice stress reduction** behaviors such as outdoor and physical activity, spending positive time with loved ones, and practicing favorite hobbie, and
4. **reach out to mental health providers early on** if you notice signs of emerging school disengagement or depression.

Both **mental health therapy and medication can support** children, adolescents, and adults with ADHD through these challenging times.

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About the Author



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