

National Survey of Children’s Health

Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) Prevalence and Health Care Access, 2024

Data Brief | July 2026

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About the NSCH

The Health Resources and Services Administration’s (HRSA) Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB) funds and directs the [National Survey of Children’s Health \(NSCH\)](#), which the U.S. Census Bureau conducts.

The NSCH is the largest national- and state-level survey on the health and health care needs of children ages 0 – 17, their families, and their communities.

It is an annual household survey completed by a parent or guardian, either by web or paper and pencil.

Content

- Health conditions and functional difficulties
- Social and emotional well-being
- Health-related behaviors
- Health care service access and use
- School environment and engagement
- Family life and activities
- Community activities or experiences

State Oversamples

Oversampling increases the number of households sampled and surveys completed to enable detailed analysis of specific populations, such as regions within a state or children with special health care needs. In 2024, 13 states and 1 metropolitan area sponsored oversamples.

2024 Data Release

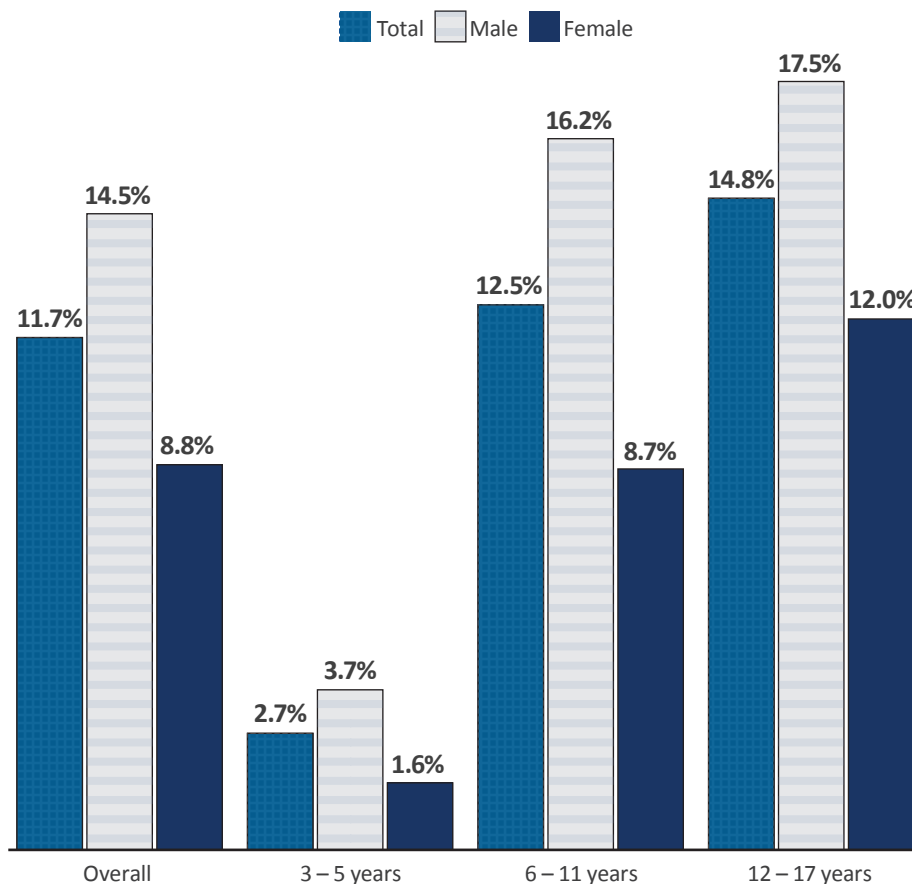
Access the most recent [data and supporting materials](#).

ADHD is associated with increased risk for **chronic diseases, other health conditions, and mortality** across the lifespan. The prevalence of diagnosed ADHD among children has **increased** over time while prevalence of treatment has declined; **estimates vary by age, sex, and treatment type**. Children with ADHD may need **more health care services** than children without ADHD. This brief presents 2024 data on children ages 3 – 17 in the United States (U.S.) and compares health care service use and barriers to health care between children with and without a current ADHD diagnosis.

Prevalence of Currently Diagnosed ADHD

- In 2024, 11.7% of U.S. children ages 3 – 17, or an estimated 7.1 million children, had a current ADHD diagnosis. This represents 1 in 9 children.
- A higher percentage of boys than girls had a current ADHD diagnosis (14.5% vs. 8.8%) and prevalence increased with age for both boys and girls: 3 – 5 years (3.7% and 1.6%, respectively), 6 – 11 years (16.2% and 8.7%, respectively), and 12 – 17 years (17.5% and 12.0%, respectively).

Current ADHD Diagnosis Among Children Ages 3 – 17, Overall and by Age and Sex, 2024

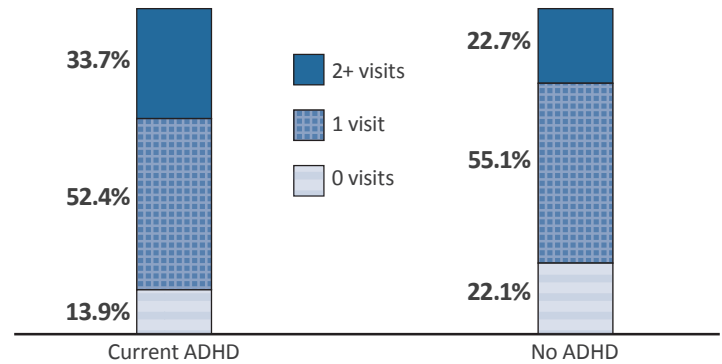


Past Year Preventive Visit

Clinical guidelines recommend that all children ages 3 and older have a preventive visit or well-child checkup once a year, defined as a visit when not sick or injured.

- In 2024, a third (33.7%) of children with a current ADHD diagnosis had **2 or more** preventive visits in the past year compared to 22.7% of children without ADHD.
- About half of both children with a current ADHD diagnosis (52.4%) or without ADHD (55.1%) had 1 preventive visit.
- Additionally, a smaller percentage of children with a current ADHD diagnosis had no preventive visits in the past year than children without ADHD (13.9% vs. 22.1%).

Past Year Preventive Visit Among Children Ages 3 – 17, by Current ADHD Diagnosis Status, 2024

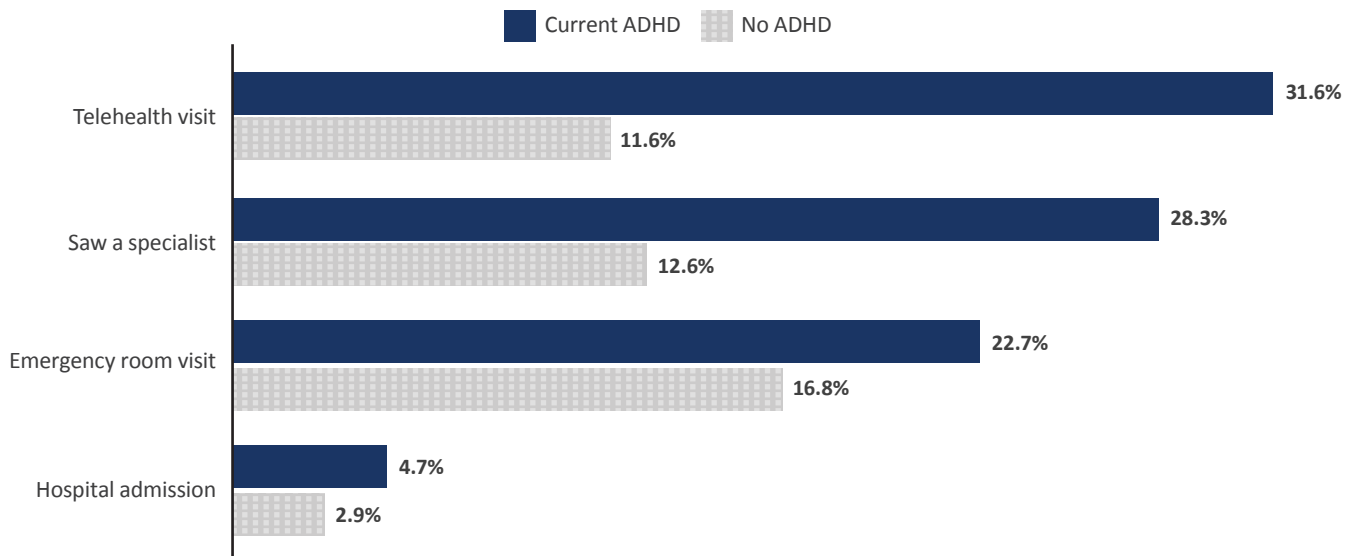


Past Year Health Care Service Use

Children with ADHD may use different forms and types of health care services than children without ADHD. For example, parents of children who have ADHD may prefer telehealth—visits by video or phone—to **save time, reduce costs and family stress**, and **facilitate access to care**. Due to **increased risk for injuries** and **other health conditions**, children with ADHD may see a specialist (other than a mental health professional), visit a hospital **emergency room**, or be **admitted to a hospital** more often than children without ADHD.

- **Telehealth visit:** In 2024, almost a third (31.6%) of children with a current ADHD diagnosis had a telehealth visit in the past year compared to 11.6% of children without ADHD.
- **Specialist visit:** Children with a current ADHD diagnosis more often saw a specialist in the past year than children without ADHD (28.3% vs. 12.6%).
- **Emergency room visit:** More children with a current ADHD diagnosis (22.7%) had at least one emergency room visit in the past year than children without ADHD (16.8%).
- **Hospital admission:** Children with a current ADHD diagnosis were more likely to have a hospital admission in the past year (4.7%) compared to those without ADHD (2.9%).

Past Year Health Care Service Use Among Children Ages 3 – 17 by Current ADHD Diagnosis Status, 2024

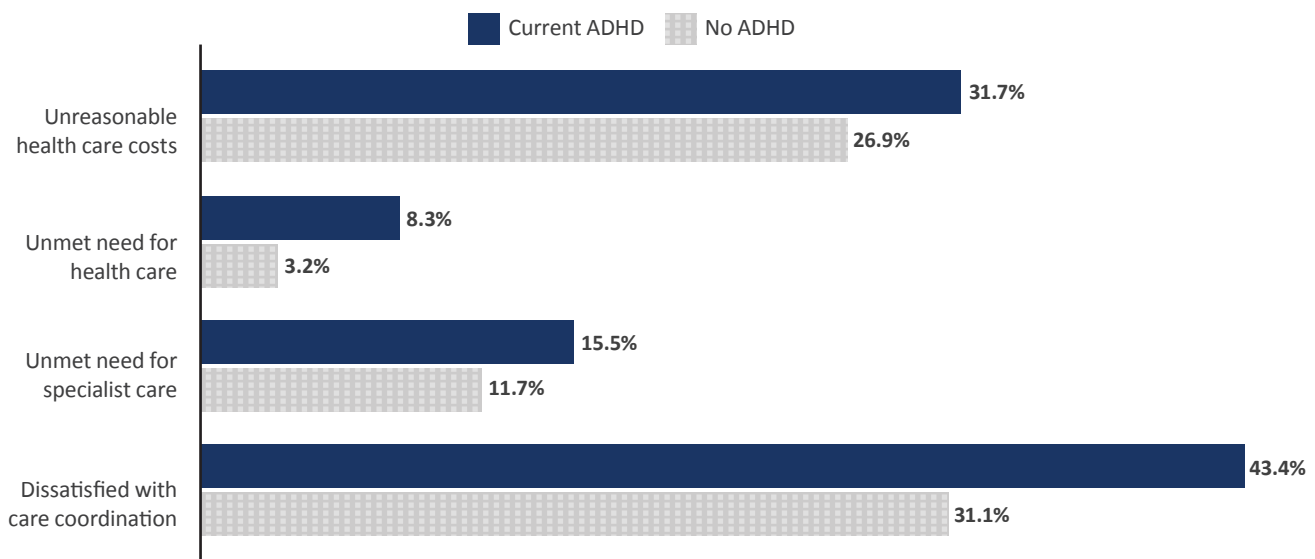


Barriers to Health Care

Children with ADHD often experience higher **health care costs** and more **unmet health care needs** than children without ADHD. Some of these barriers to health care may be related to **co-occurring health conditions** that require specialty care and **coordination across multiple providers**.

- **Unreasonable health care costs:** In 2024, children with a current ADHD diagnosis were more likely to have health care costs in the past year reported as unreasonable—defined as sometimes or never reasonable—compared to children without an ADHD diagnosis (31.7% vs. 26.9%).
- **Unmet need for health care:** About 1 in 12 (8.3%) children with a current ADHD diagnosis experienced an unmet need for health care—defined as needing but not receiving any type of health care, including medical, dental, vision, and mental health care—compared to about 1 in 30 (3.2%) children without ADHD.
- **Unmet need for specialist care:** Among children who needed any type of specialty care, other than from a mental health professional, having an unmet need for specialist care did not differ significantly by ADHD status (15.5% with current ADHD vs. 11.7% without ADHD).
- **Dissatisfied with care coordination:** An estimated 43.4% of children with a current ADHD diagnosis had parents who reported being less than very satisfied with their care coordination—defined as being somewhat satisfied/dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with communication across multiple providers—compared to 31.1% of children without ADHD.

Past Year Health Care Challenges Among Children Ages 3 – 17 by Current ADHD Diagnosis Status, 2024



DATA NOTES

In 2024, parents/caregivers completed questionnaires for 51,375 children ages 0 – 17. All results in this data brief are based on data from 44,611 children ages 3 – 17 with a response to the current ADHD question, “Has a doctor or other health care provider told you that this child has Attention Deficit Disorder or Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder, that is, ADD or ADHD?” and, “Does this child currently have the condition?”. Estimates presented in this brief are weighted to represent the population of children living in U.S. households. Unless otherwise noted, described differences between estimates are statistically significant using two-sided tests ($p < 0.05$). For further information on the design, operation, and analysis of the NSCH, please see available [Technical Documentation](#).