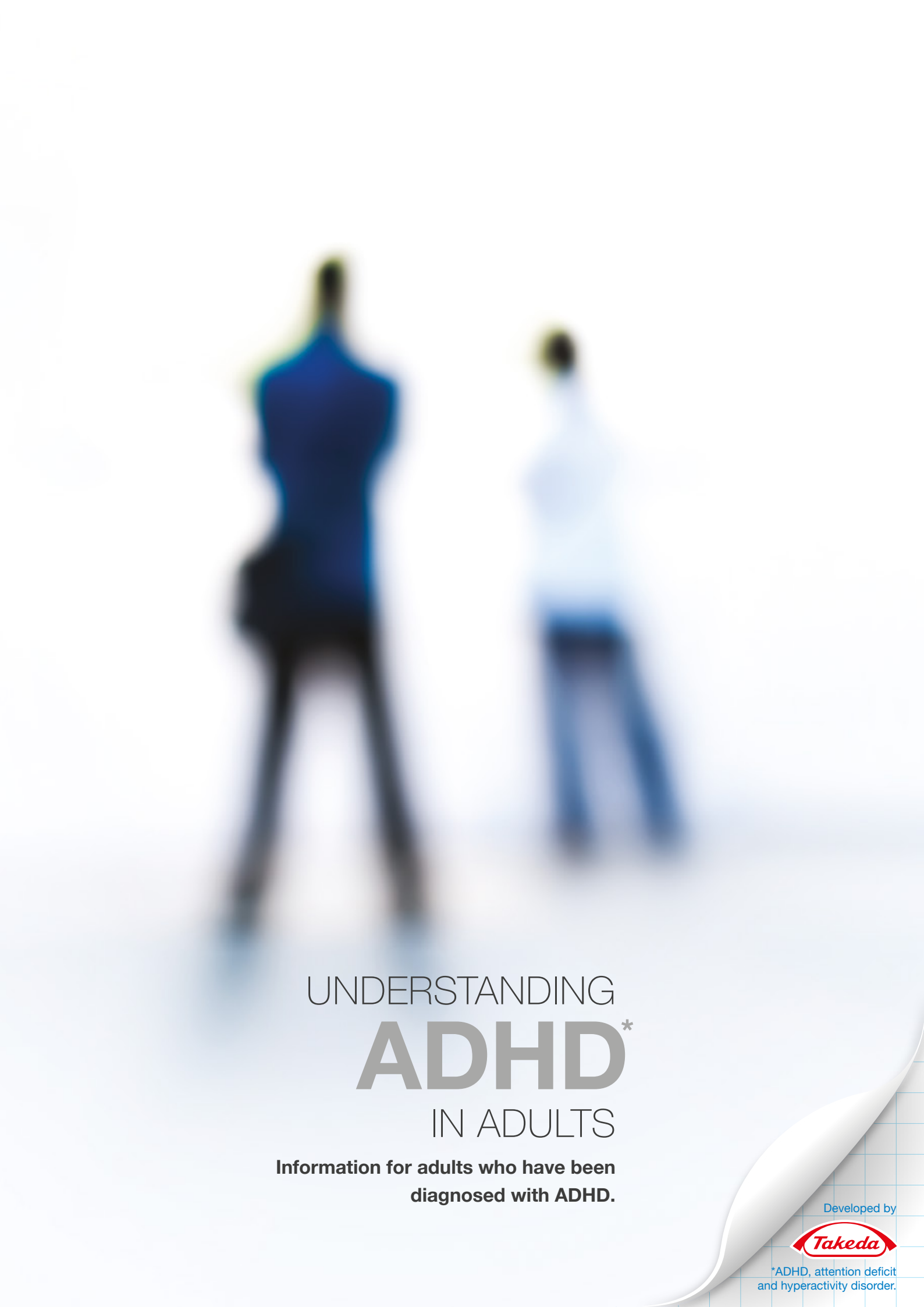


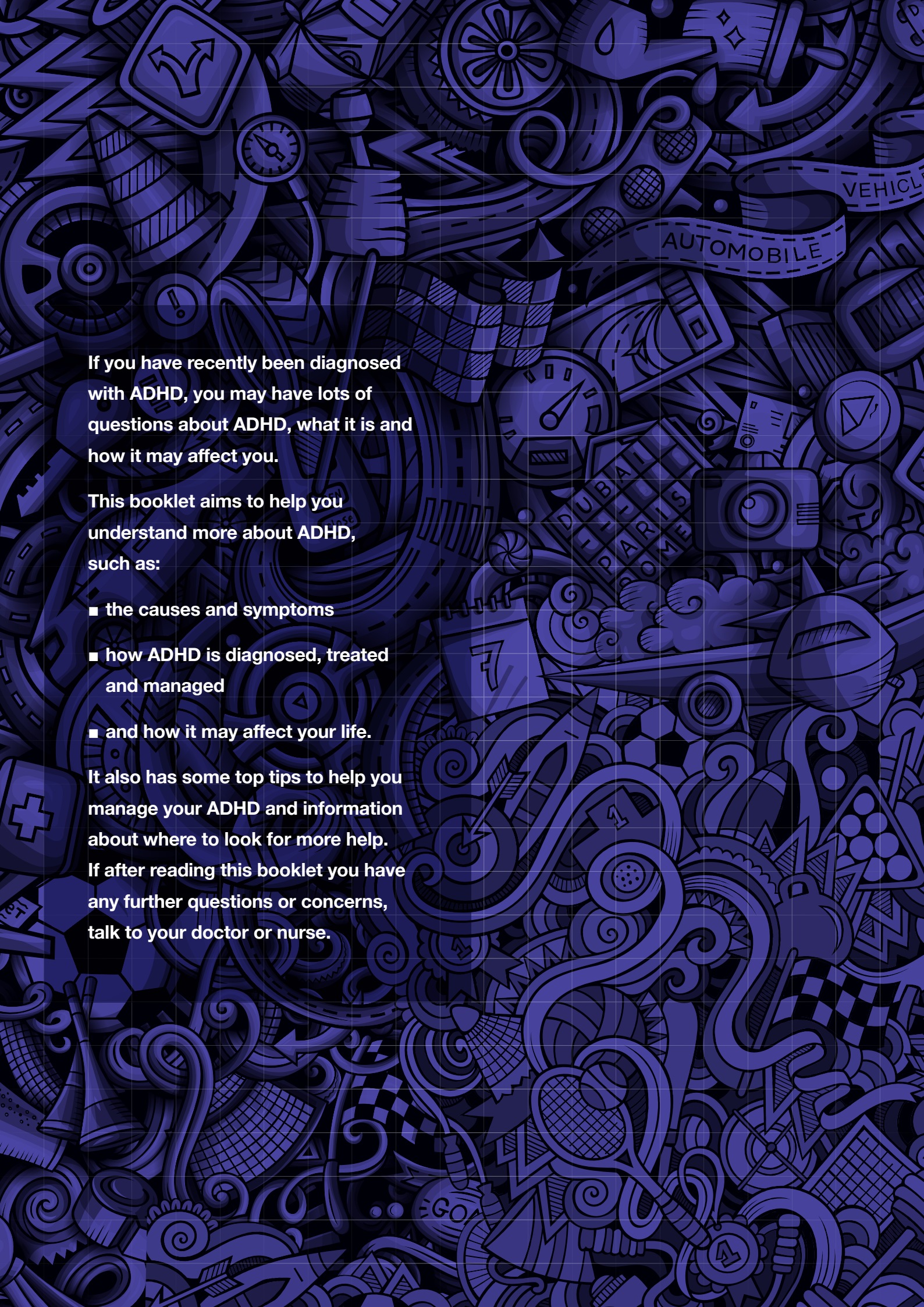
UNDERSTANDING ADHD* IN ADULTS

Information for adults who have been diagnosed with ADHD.

Developed by

Takeda

*ADHD, attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder.



If you have recently been diagnosed with ADHD, you may have lots of questions about ADHD, what it is and how it may affect you.

This booklet aims to help you understand more about ADHD, such as:

- the causes and symptoms
- how ADHD is diagnosed, treated and managed
- and how it may affect your life.

It also has some top tips to help you manage your ADHD and information about where to look for more help. If after reading this booklet you have any further questions or concerns, talk to your doctor or nurse.



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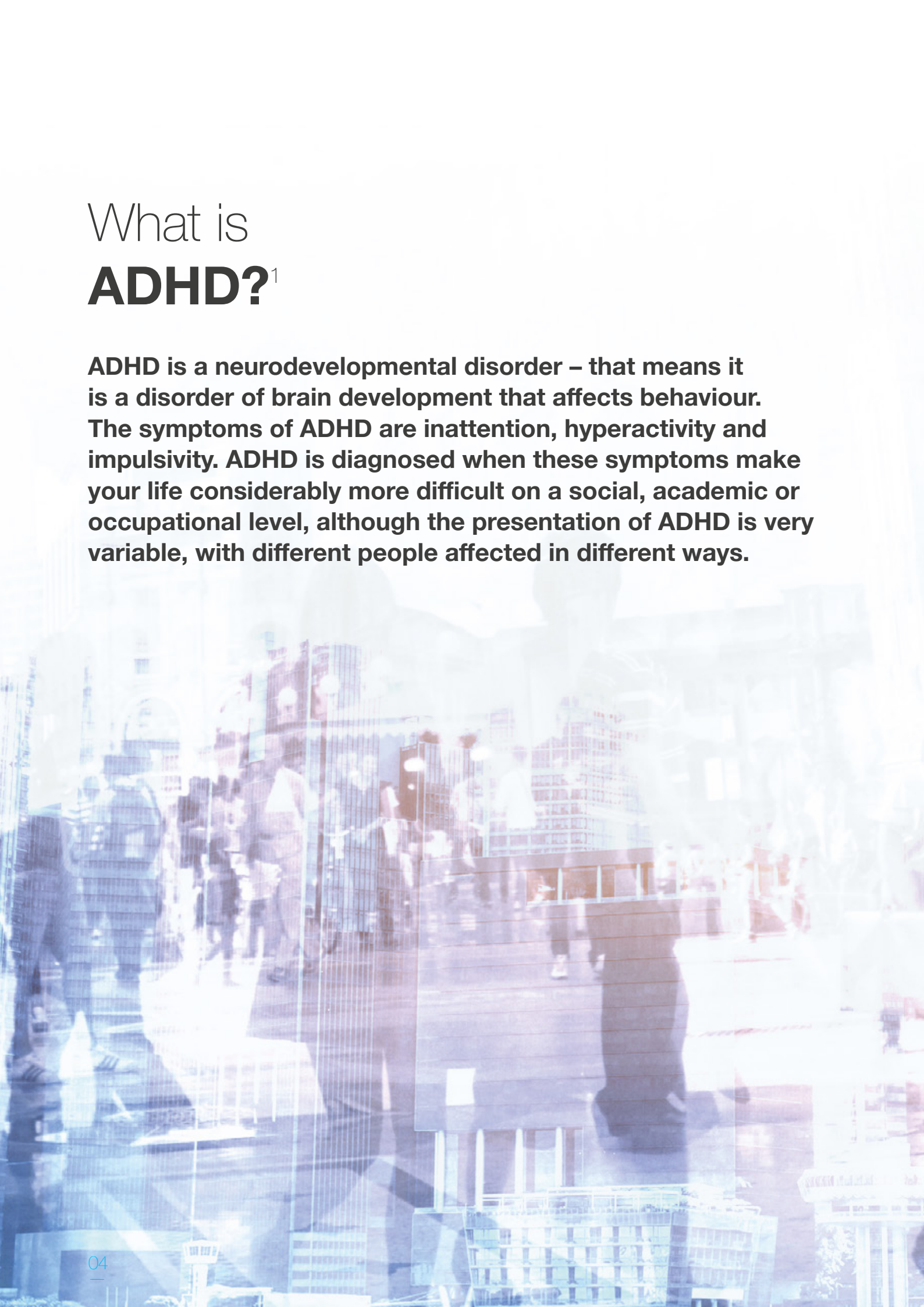
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What is **ADHD?**[1]

ADHD is a neurodevelopmental disorder – that means it is a disorder of brain development that affects behaviour. The symptoms of ADHD are inattention, hyperactivity and impulsivity. ADHD is diagnosed when these symptoms make your life considerably more difficult on a social, academic or occupational level, although the presentation of ADHD is very variable, with different people affected in different ways.



Symptoms of inattention

People with ADHD may experience:

- Difficulty staying focused, for example, when filling in a form
- Difficulty keeping to deadlines
- Forgetfulness, for example, paying bills, returning phone calls or going to appointments
- Losing things regularly, such as keys or wallet
- Getting easily distracted
- Making careless mistakes at work or during other activities
- Difficulty keeping things organised and tidy

Symptoms of hyperactivity and impulsivity

People with ADHD may experience:

- Difficulty sitting still
- Feeling restless or impatient
- Being talkative or often interrupting conversations
- Intruding into, or taking over, what others are doing
- Acting quickly without thinking, such as darting into the street without looking

Some people with ADHD show all these symptoms, while others show only some, and your ADHD symptoms may also change as you get older.

There are three different presentations of ADHD:[2]

1. Mostly inattentive type – individuals have mainly symptoms of inattention
2. Mostly hyperactive/impulsive type – individuals have mainly symptoms of hyperactivity and impulsivity
3. Combined type – individuals have symptoms of inattention and hyperactivity/impulsivity in more-or-less equal amounts



What effect does ADHD have on adult life?

ADHD may affect many parts of adult life, including work, education and relationships. Here are some examples of possible difficulties experienced by adults with ADHD, although these may vary from individual to individual:

At work

- **Disorganisation** – finding it hard to plan or organise their work
- **Inattention** – finding it difficult to concentrate on work and making careless mistakes
- **Unable to prioritise** – finding it difficult to decide which jobs need doing first
- **Distractibility** – being easily distracted by what is going on in the workplace or by their own racing thoughts
- **Issues with authority** – finding it difficult to do as they are asked or arguing with their boss
- **Anxiety** – feeling anxious or worrying about work
- **Forgetfulness** – forgetting to carry out tasks

In an education environment

(e.g. college, university or training sessions)

- Finding it difficult to handle large workloads
- **Disorganisation** – finding it hard to plan or organise their work
- **Inattention** – finding it difficult to concentrate on lectures or training sessions for long periods of time
- Finding it hard to follow instructions given by the lecturer/teacher
- Making careless mistakes





Relationships

- Getting easily irritated by what others are doing or saying
- **Inattention** – finding it difficult to listen to, or focus on, conversations
- **Impulsive talking** – talking too much, interrupting what others are saying and blurting things out
- **Forgetfulness** – forgetting to do things for others
- Losing their temper with their partner or loved ones too quickly

Who has **ADHD?**

ADHD was once considered to be a childhood disorder where symptoms reduced as you got older but it is now known to continue into adulthood in more than half of people (studies estimate around 50–65% of people).[3,4]

As you get older, the type of symptoms you experience may change.[1] For example, you may feel less physically hyperactive or you may have learned to cope with some of your symptoms.

ADHD is slightly more often diagnosed in men compared with women.[2] However, research suggests that the number of ADHD symptoms and the type of ADHD are actually similar between men and women.

Research suggests that around one in 30 adults have ADHD although this varies from country to country.[5]



1 in 30 ADULTS



What causes **ADHD?**

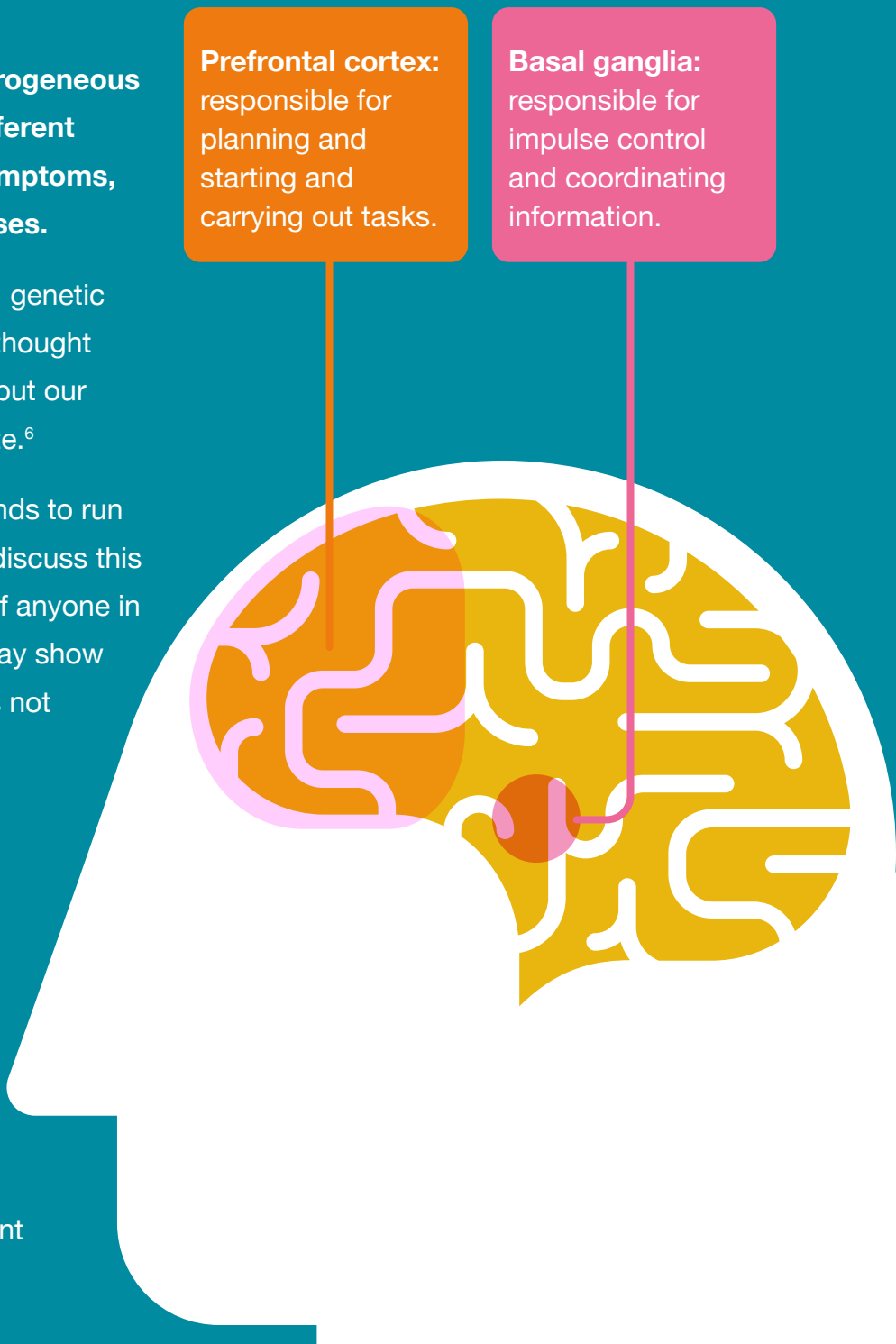
ADHD is a complex and heterogeneous disease.[6] This means that different people may have different symptoms, with different underlying causes.

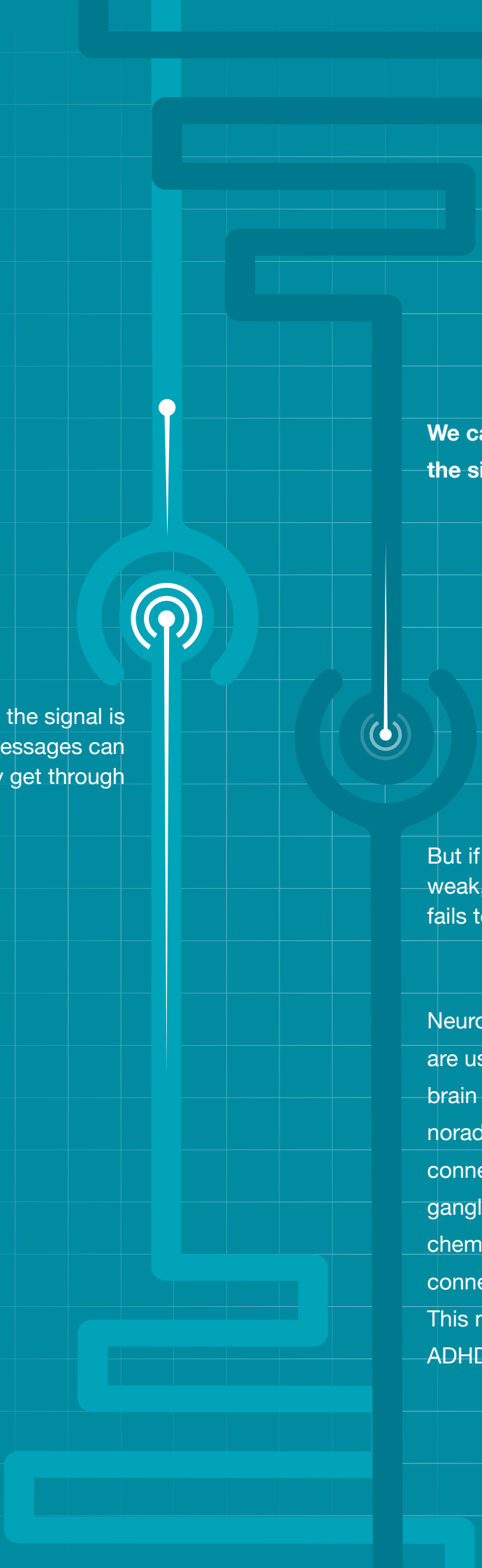
With no single cause identified, genetic and environmental factors are thought to play a part in the condition, but our understanding is still incomplete.[6]

Research shows that ADHD tends to run in families.[7-9] You may wish to discuss this with your family; do you know if anyone in the family has ADHD or who may show some of the symptoms but has not been diagnosed?

Research has also shown important differences between the brains of people with and without ADHD. Brain areas affected by ADHD include those involved in:[13]

- planning and carrying out tasks
- inhibiting excessive movement
- shifting focus
- reward and motivation





We can think of brain connections like the signal on a mobile phone.

When the signal is strong, messages can easily get through

But if the signal is weak, the message fails to send.

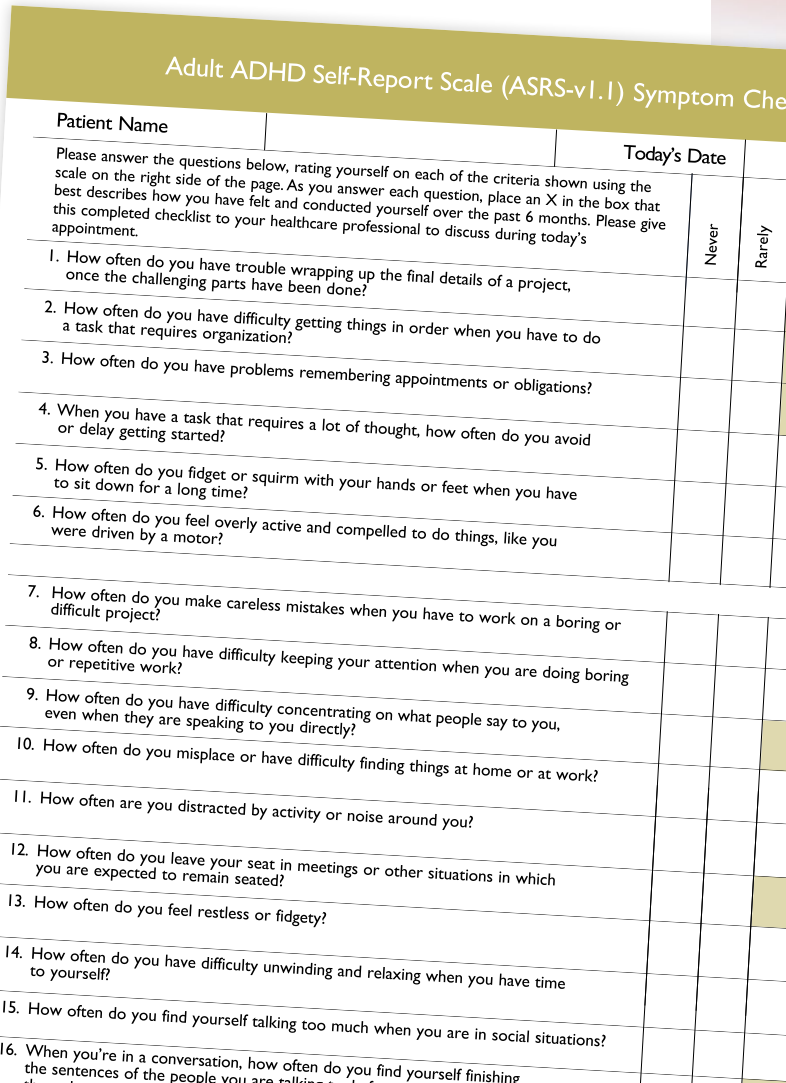
Neurotransmitters are chemicals that are used to pass messages between brain cells. Two neurotransmitters called noradrenaline and dopamine normally connect the prefrontal cortex and the basal ganglia.[6] In ADHD, levels of some of these chemicals are altered which disrupts the connections and networks in the brain.[10-12] This makes it difficult for people with ADHD to concentrate or pay attention. [11,12]

How are people assessed for **ADHD?**

There is no one test for ADHD so your doctor may have used a variety of methods during your assessment for ADHD.[14] You may have been asked about your life and the challenges you face, your childhood, your family and your physical health, and your doctor may have spoken to your family or friends (with your permission).

You may have been asked to complete a questionnaire (also called a rating scale) to help assess your symptoms and how they affect your life. Some of the names of these rating scales are the ASRS (Adult ADHD Self-Report Scale) and the DIVA (Diagnostic Interview for ADHD in Adults).

Your doctor has used all this information to diagnose ADHD according to established criteria. There are two internationally recognised systems for diagnosing ADHD and these describe ADHD as a persistent pattern of inattention and/or hyperactivity-impulsivity that interferes with functioning or development and causes you difficulties in more than one area of your life (e.g. both at work and at home).[1,15]



Adult ADHD Self-Report Scale (ASRS-v1.1) Symptom Che

Patient Name

Today's Date

Please answer the questions below, rating yourself on each of the criteria shown using the scale on the right side of the page. As you answer each question, place an X in the box that best describes how you have felt and conducted yourself over the past 6 months. Please give this completed checklist to your healthcare professional to discuss during today's appointment.

Never | Rarely

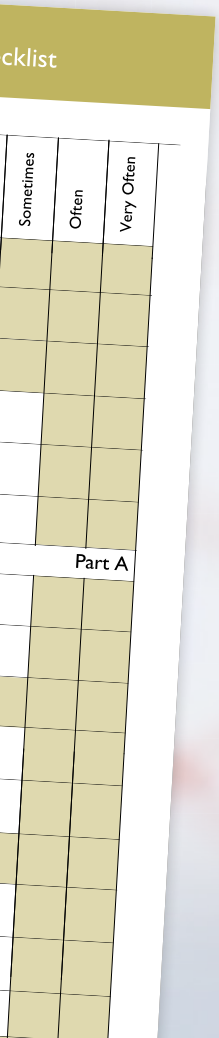
1. How often do you have trouble wrapping up the final details of a project, once the challenging parts have been done?
2. How often do you have difficulty getting things in order when you have to do a task that requires organization?
3. How often do you have problems remembering appointments or obligations?
4. When you have a task that requires a lot of thought, how often do you avoid or delay getting started?
5. How often do you fidget or squirm with your hands or feet when you have to sit down for a long time?
6. How often do you feel overly active and compelled to do things, like you were driven by a motor?
7. How often do you make careless mistakes when you have to work on a boring or difficult project?
8. How often do you have difficulty keeping your attention when you are doing boring or repetitive work?
9. How often do you have difficulty concentrating on what people say to you, even when they are speaking to you directly?
10. How often do you misplace or have difficulty finding things at home or at work?
11. How often are you distracted by activity or noise around you?
12. How often do you leave your seat in meetings or other situations in which you are expected to remain seated?
13. How often do you feel restless or fidgety?
14. How often do you have difficulty unwinding and relaxing when you have time to yourself?
15. How often do you find yourself talking too much when you are in social situations?
16. When you're in a conversation, how often do you find yourself finishing the sentences of the people you are talking

What happens after being diagnosed with ADHD?

Following your diagnosis of ADHD, you may have mixed feelings. You may have struggled with the symptoms of ADHD for a long time so being diagnosed offers an explanation for the problems you may have experienced throughout your life.[16] Hopefully you can now focus on moving forward by understanding your symptoms, accessing the help you need, and identifying and building on your individual strengths.[14]

You may have previously been diagnosed with another condition or this may be the first time you have talked to a doctor about your problems. Sometimes the ADHD has been hidden or masked by other conditions. These include major depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder and personality disorder.Some of the symptoms of these conditions overlap with those of ADHD. It could be that all the symptoms are caused by ADHD or it could be that more than one condition is present.[16]

Your healthcare team will work with you to find strategies to manage your symptoms.



How can ADHD be **managed?**[14]

Because everyone with ADHD is different, they all need their own individual management plan, tailored to their own needs. There is a wide range of available options to support you on your journey.

Depending on your individual needs and symptoms, this may involve psychological and educational therapies, medication, and/or comprehensive treatment. Regular check-ups will determine what changes, if any, need to be made.

Your healthcare professional will work with you to find the right approach for you at every step. Different healthcare professionals will be available to support you along your journey, for example, the doctor, nurse or psychologist.





What are the **goals** of treatment?[21]

It's a good idea to set one or more treatment goals with your healthcare professional. Think about what you would like to achieve and discuss it with your family, friends or colleagues. These goals could be as big or as little as you want, for the short or the long term, but try not to set expectations too high to start with.

- The first goal should be easily achievable within a short time frame
- You can reassess goals from time to time and make them more ambitious as time goes by
- Don't worry if you have a bad day – just try again the next day

What are psychological & educational therapies?

Some psychological and educational therapies are effective in some people with ADHD. For other people, they will be used along with medication, as part of a comprehensive treatment plan.[14,17]

- Behavioural therapy:[14,17-19] These talking therapies are about learning to manage your problems by changing the way you think and behave. For example, cognitive behavioural therapy.
- Psycho-education:[14,17,20] Educating you, your family and/or carers to help them understand about ADHD. This may be on an individual basis or in group sessions.



What about **medication** for ADHD?

You may decide with your doctor to take medication for your ADHD.

There are two main types of medication available:[14,17,21]

- **Stimulants**
- **Non-stimulants**

Both types of medication alter the communication of messages between nerve cells, reducing the symptoms associated with ADHD.[22-24] Some people may respond to or tolerate only one medication, whereas others may respond to or tolerate more than one.[25,26]



Which type of medication may be suitable for me?

Each ADHD medication is available in different doses. Some also offer different formulations to choose from, including short-acting (lasting a few hours) and long-acting (lasting most of the day).

Non-stimulants work in a different way to stimulants – they may take longer to work but have a longer duration of action.[27,28]

In order to best meet your individual needs, it may take a little while to work out which is the best medication, dose and formulation for you. Your healthcare professional will re-assess your treatment regularly and make adjustments, if necessary, to provide you with the treatment that works best for you.[14]

What about side-effects?

Like all medicines, your ADHD treatment may cause side-effects although not everybody gets them. Different side-effects can occur with the different types of medication.

Your healthcare professional will talk to you about which side-effects may occur with your treatment. They will review your treatment regularly and check your weight, heart rate and blood pressure before and during treatment.[14] If you are concerned about any of the effects of your treatment, including side-effects, please talk to your healthcare professional.

Sometimes side-effects get better once you have settled on the medicine or you may learn to manage them. If side-effects are bothering you, your doctor may adjust the dose of the medicine or it may be necessary to change to a different medicine. You should not stop taking your medicine without first talking to your doctor.



What about **work** or **college?**[14]

At work or college, talk to your employer or tutor about 'reasonable adjustments'. Employers and education providers have legal obligations to make sure that workers or students with disabilities or physical or mental health conditions are not substantially disadvantaged when doing their jobs or during their education.

Environmental modifications are changes that are made to the physical environment in order to minimise the impact of a person's ADHD on their day-to-day life. Appropriate environmental modifications will be specific to the circumstances of each person with ADHD and should be determined from an assessment of their needs.

Examples may include:[14]

- # changes to seating arrangements
- # changes to lighting and noise
- # reducing distractions (for example, using headphones)
- # optimising work or education to have shorter periods of focus with movement breaks
- # reinforcing verbal requests with written instructions

Is it helpful to **talk to others** about my ADHD?

Now you've been diagnosed with ADHD, it may help to involve your family and friends so they can help you. Think carefully before you talk to someone about your ADHD, as you can't "untell" them.

If you have one particular friend or loved one that you can really trust, maybe tell them first so you can get their thoughts. Try to talk to people face-to-face rather than by text or social media. Not everyone understands what ADHD is so think how you can explain it to them. Maybe you could use some of the information in this booklet.

You may need to talk to your tutor or employer so they can help you at college or work (please see the previous page). Is there a tutor or colleague that you trust that could help you?

Remember you don't have to tell everyone. Think about the arguments for and against, for example:



For

It will help friends, family, colleagues or teachers to understand you better

They can support and help you

You will be in control of the situation and what is said

They may be able to help you avoid situations where you could become anxious or upset

Against

People may not know much about ADHD, or what they know could be outdated or wrong

People may tell others who you don't want to know

What if someone puts it on social media – are you ok with this?

People might treat you differently



Remember,

- **You have plenty of time to tell people about your ADHD – there's no rush.**
- **Learn as much as you can about ADHD to give you confidence to talk about it.**
- **Choose wisely – not everyone needs to know. The decision is yours.**

What can I do to **help myself?**

It may take time to find out what works best for you (and what you should avoid), but there is plenty of support and advice available. Here are a few tips that may help:



- Have a daily routine so you know what needs doing and when
- Breakdown tasks into more manageable chunks
- Get regular exercise and have a healthy diet
- Talk to your employer or tutor about reasonable adjustments to help you at work or college
- Switch off electronic devices when you're trying to focus on a task and around one hour before bedtime to help you relax
- Get a good night's sleep

Here are a few tips that may help you to organise your day:

- Store important things, like keys and wallets/purses, in the same place every day
- Use checklists to keep track of what needs to be done around the house
- Keep an up-to-date calendar on a phone or tablet – note down all appointments, social arrangements and things that need to be done by a certain date
- Tick off tasks as they are completed on a phone, tablet, post-it note, etc.
- Structure the working day – use daily time sheets and computer/phone alerts to help keep track of tasks
- Use 'In' and 'Out' trays to sort jobs, for example, 'Important for today', 'Complete this week', 'Pending' or 'Done/Waiting for response'
- Break up bigger tasks into smaller, manageable chunks and combine them with other activities to keep focused

Sleep problems are more common among people with ADHD. Here are a few pointers on how to improve the quality of sleep:

- Keep a routine – try to wake up and go to bed at approximately the same time every day
- Avoid watching TV, playing computer games, using social media, eating or doing work while in bed – these activities provide passive mental stimulation and will only add to any sleep problems
- Avoid doing any exercise within 2 hours of bedtime
- Avoid drinks containing caffeine (e.g. coke, coffee or tea) or chocolate at least 6 hours before bedtime

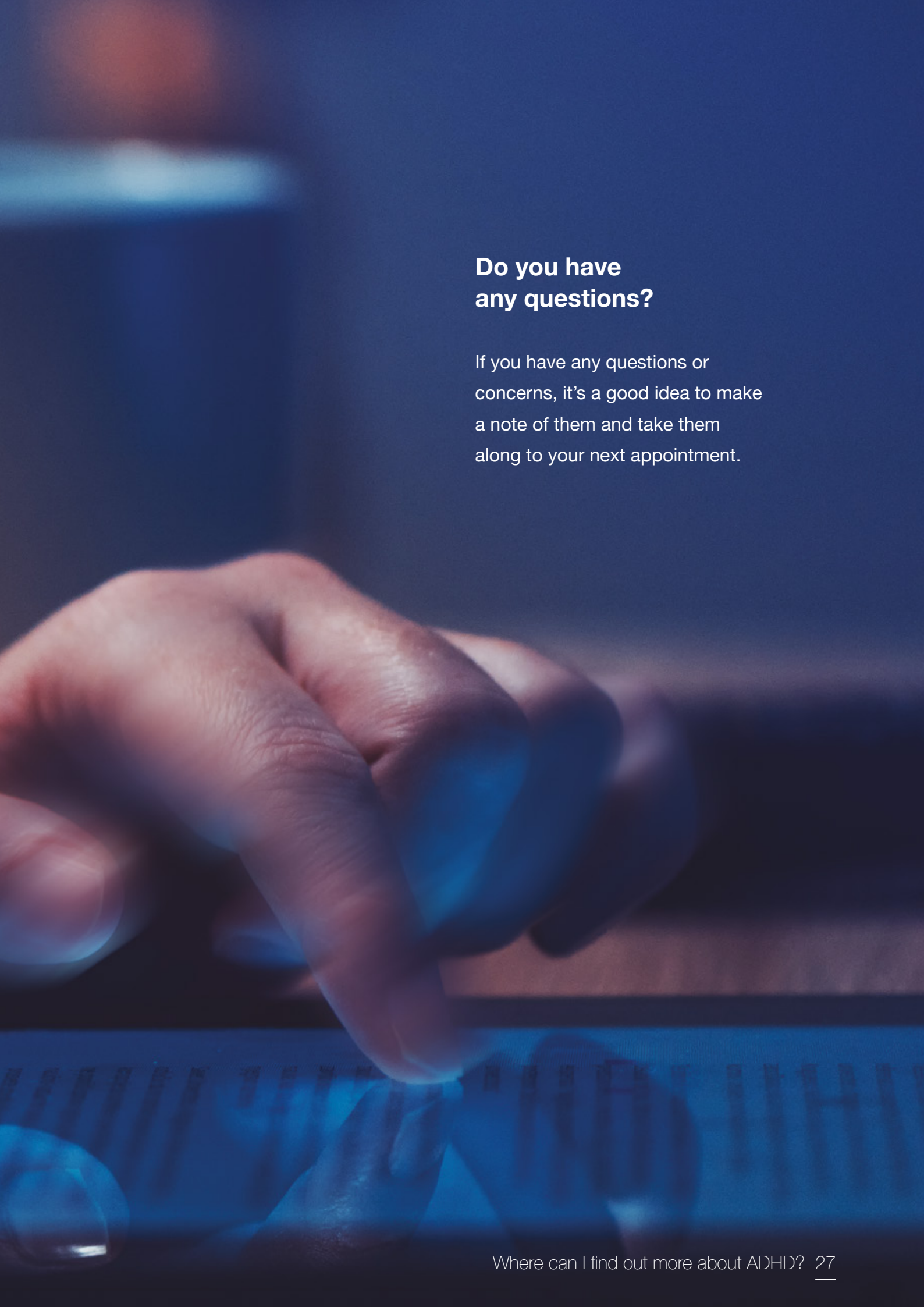
Where can I find out **more about ADHD?**

There's lots of help available for people with ADHD. Some useful websites include:



Your healthcare professional may also be able to provide details of local support groups.

*Developed and funded by Takeda



Do you have any questions?

If you have any questions or concerns, it's a good idea to make a note of them and take them along to your next appointment.

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Takeda Pharmaceutical
Company Limited.
1 Kingdom Street
Paddington
London W2 6BD

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