

You Can Learn to Be More Patient

Activity 4

For You to Know

Kids with ADHD have a hard time waiting for something they want. They would rather have a small cookie right now than a much larger cookie in two hours. But you can learn to be more patient and enjoy the larger cookie later! Learning to be more patient will make it easier for you to get along with other people.

Heather couldn't wait for her mom to serve dinner. It was meatballs and spaghetti, Heather's favorite! But her mom was on the phone, and Heather could see that dinner wasn't ready.

"When are we eating?" Heather asked. She knew she wasn't supposed to interrupt her mom on the phone, but sometimes her mom didn't seem to mind.

Heather's mom held up five fingers. Then she repeated the gesture three times more.

"Twenty minutes?" Heather asked. Her mom nodded.

Twenty minutes later, Heather went back into the kitchen, ready to eat. Her mom was still on the phone, the meatballs were still simmering, and the unopened box of spaghetti still sat on the counter.

"Where's dinner?" Heather asked loudly. "You said it would be twenty minutes."

Her mom held up one finger to her lips, then pointed to the phone, indicating that Heather should stop asking questions and be quiet.

"But I'm hungry!" Heather said. "You can talk after dinner."

Her mom shook her head back and forth. Heather knew that her mom was getting angry, but Heather was angry, too. "I'm starving," she shouted. "I need my dinner!"

Heather's mom looked at her daughter with a cold stare that Heather didn't like at all. Then she put down the phone and said, "You won't collapse if dinner is a little late. Now go to your room,"

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and don't come down until I get you. And if you interrupt me just one more time, you won't be getting any dinner tonight."

Heather stomped off to her room, thinking, "I have the meanest mom in the whole world."

Did you ever get into trouble for being impatient? What happened?

For You to Do

Have you ever had someone ask you, "Can't you just sit still and be patient?" Most kids with ADHD hear this all too often, but they are not the only ones who have difficulty waiting. Even adults can have a hard time being patient. Maybe you've been in a traffic jam where people are honking at each other and even yelling out the window. Or maybe you've seen an adult get angry at a computer that was running slowly.

Most people don't like to wait for things, but some things can't be rushed. Here are five things that can't be rushed. Can you think of five more?

- Growing up
- Your birthday
- A visit to the doctor's office
- Learning to play a sport or an instrument
- A garden

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

A "Patience Box" can help when you have to be patient. Ask a parent for a shoe box, and decorate it if you like. On small pieces of paper, write down all the things you can think of to do when you have to be patient. For example, you might write, "E-mail a friend" or "Make a sculpture out of clay." You can ask your parents or even your friends to write down some interesting activities, too. The next time you have a hard time waiting, close your eyes and reach into your Patience Box. Pick up to three activities to do, and then select the one that you think would be most fun.

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... And More to Do

Very few kids find it easy to be patient, but it is important to learn to be patient even when you don't feel like it. Here is an activity that requires patience. See if you can do it without getting angry or upset. The more patience you have, the easier it will be.

The Patience Maze

This maze doesn't look too hard, does it? Can you do it without crossing a single line *and using the hand opposite the one you write with*? In other words, if you are right-handed, use your left hand; if you are left-handed, use your right hand. Use a pencil and go slowly. If you cross the line even once, erase what you have done and start over.

