

AUTISM & ADHD

Children with autism, attention deficit disorder (ADD) and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) suffer from chronic periods of inattention and impulsiveness. At school and in the home, kids with ADD/ADHD struggle to remain focused on the task at hand. However, their attention span may increase dramatically when performing tasks of their own choosing. Conventional treatments, including prescription stimulants and amphetamines such as Ritalin and Dexedrine, have many side effects. Naturopathic medicine offers excellent treatment alternatives for children with ADD/ADHD.

TRADITIONAL CHINESE MEDICINE

An unbalanced body creates mental and emotional imbalance. For centuries, traditional Chinese medicine has restored harmony to body and mind, balancing yin and yang using foods, herbs and therapies such as acupuncture.

HOMEOPATHIC TREATMENT

Naturopathic doctors can treat autism and ADD/ADHD with homeopathic medicine, which uses tiny doses of natural substances to stimulate the body's natural healing mechanism. The right homeopathic treatments can relieve symptoms by balancing your child's unique characteristics, tendencies and personality traits.

DIET & NUTRITION

Good nutrition is crucial for health, especially for growing children. Many kids are sensitive to dairy, wheat, and food additives such as BHA, BHT, salicylates, artificial colourings, flavourings and preservatives. Children are more likely to suffer from ADD/ADHD if their diets are high in caffeine (including cola drinks), refined carbohydrates (including white bread, soda pop, chips, chocolate bars and candy) and trans fat (including margarine, shortening, fast food and convenience foods made with hydrogenated oil). Many of our children's favourite foods are high in sugar, trans fat, caffeine and calories and contain no nutritional value. Even foods that are usually considered healthy, such as peanut butter, often contain trans fat-rich hydrogenated oil. Read labels carefully to ensure your child is eating healthy foods that are low in sugar and hydrogenated oil.

Autism and ADHD/ADD can occur more frequently in children whose diets are low in omega-3 fatty acids, found abundantly in walnuts, fish and freshly-ground flaxseed. The disorder may also occur in children with undiagnosed sensitivities to foods such as wheat gluten or dairy. To improve and maintain your children's health, reduce their intake of sugar and trans fat, serve more fresh fruits and vegetables, raw nuts, fish and whole grains, and try eliminating foods they may be sensitive to.

NUTRITIONAL SUPPLEMENTS

Appropriate supplements for a child suffering from autism and ADD/ADHD may include:

Calcium and magnesium ~ calm the nervous system

B-complex ~ helps relax a stressed nervous system and improves mental functioning and concentration.

Salmon oil ~ contains omega-3 fatty acids that strengthen cognitive function in the brain

L-Tyrosine ~ an amino acid that boosts mood-balancing hormones in the body and brain

HERBAL MEDICINES

Herbal medicines have long been used to relax the nervous system, relieve stress and calm the mind. Herbs that relieve symptoms of ADD/ADHD include chamomile, skullcap, oat straw, chamomile, catnip, lemon balm, hawthorn berry, gotu kolu, valerian and rosemary. Herbal medicine should always be administered under the supervision of a naturopathic doctor.

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