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Diet and Nutrients: Alternative Solutions for Children with ADHD

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is the most common behavioral disorder in children, estimated to affect between 5 to 10 percent of children and 3 to 6 percent of adults, according to the Attention Deficit Disorder Association. Children with ADHD tend to be hyperactive, impulsive, and inattentive.

Not everyone who is overly hyperactive, inattentive, or impulsive has ADHD. Since most people answer out of turn, are distracted easily, and become disorganized, how can specialists tell if the problem is specifically ADHD?

Health care providers can diagnose ADHD with the help of standard guidelines from the American Academy of Pediatrics. The behaviors must create a real handicap in at least two areas of a person's life such as in the schoolroom, at home, or in social settings. Therefore, someone who shows some symptoms but whose schoolwork or friendships are not impaired by these behaviors would not be diagnosed with ADHD. Nor would a child who seems overly active on the playground but functions well elsewhere receive an ADHD diagnosis.

The cause of ADHD remains unknown however genetics and biological factors which

affect neurotransmitter activity in the brain are influential. From a holistic point of view, food additives and food allergies, environmental allergens, nutritional deficiencies, and heavy metal toxicities such as lead, aluminum, and mercury all contribute to the cause.

New research is now appearing that shows the link between consumption of food additives by children and ADHD. An online article published in *The Lancet* in September 2007 found that artificial food coloring and additives commonly located in children's food exacerbate hyperactive behaviors in children. The study consisted of 153 3-year old and 144 8/9-year old children. Analysis was based on observation, plus a computerized test of attention for the 8/9-year old children.

Depending on the child's sensitivity, food additives cause biochemical imbalances in the body which strongly influences the way the brain functions. In the case of ADHD diagnosed children, it alters their behavior making them restless and/or distracted. There are more than 5000 additives in our food supply; therefore, making it almost impossible to completely eradicate them from our diets. However, limiting the intake by preparing meals containing whole foods and by reading labels to identify ingredients shown to exacerbate symptoms can aid in reducing the severity of the symptoms.

Omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids are crucial to brain development and function. Increasing evidence indicates that deficiencies of these fatty acids might be associated with childhood developmental disorders including ADHD. Omega-3's are often lacking in our diets. Studies have indicated that supplementation with omega-3 fatty acids help in the management of the ADHD linked behavioral and learning difficulties. Food sources containing these essential fatty acids are fish such as salmon, halibut and trout and freshly ground flaxseeds, to name a few.

Supplements containing omega-3 fatty acids can also be used. A study reported in *European Neuropsychopharmacology* in February 2007 reported that omega-3 fatty acid is highly effective in treating children with ADHD. They supplemented children over eight weeks, and results indicated that participants experienced a 30-percent reduction in symptoms without side effects. Caution should be used when buying omega-3 fatty acid supplements over-the-counter. Traces of heavy metals have been found in these supplements; therefore, high potent supplements indicating distillation processes should be obtained.

Iron deficiency has also been shown to contribute to the cause of ADHD. Low iron levels have been indicated in research to create abnormal dopamine synthesis in the brain yielding ADHD symptoms. A study published in the journal *Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent*

Medicine showed that serum ferritin levels indicating iron stores in children ages 4 to 14 years old were abnormal in 84% of the children with ADHD. In addition, low serum ferritin levels were correlated with more severe ADHD symptoms and greater cognitive deficits. These results suggest that ADHD children may benefit from iron supplementation.

If your child has been diagnosed with ADHD, remember that pharmaceutical drugs aren't the only solution available. Supplementing with critical nutrients and improving children's diets have proved to be extremely beneficial in many scientific research studies; therefore, making it a sensible alternative solution for parents to explore.

Cough and Cold Medications Withdrawn

Major media outlets announced early Thursday, October 11th that many of the makers of popular over-the-counter, infant oral cough and cold medicines are voluntarily withdrawing their products. The removal of these products comes as U.S. health regulators are in the process of reviewing the safety of such products following dozens of reported deaths since 1969, most of which involved children less than two years of age.

The FDA received reports of 54 deaths from decongestants and 69 deaths linked to antihistamines between 1969 and 2006. Side effects of the medications, such as excessive sleepiness, trouble breathing, racing

hearts, high blood pressure, hallucinations and seizures, usually were due to overdoses of the drugs.

As an impending cold and flu season approaches, it is important to remember safe and natural alternatives to most over-the-counter cold and flu medicines.

List of medicines withdrawn:

- Dimetapp Decongestant Plus Cough Infant Drops
- Dimetapp Decongestant Infant Drops
- Little Colds Decongestant Plus Cough
- Little Colds Multi-Symptom Cold Formula
- PediaCare Infant Drops Decongestant
- PediaCare Infant Drops Decongestant and Cough
- PediaCare Infant Dropper Decongestant
- PediaCare Infant Dropper Long-Acting Cough
- PediaCare Infant Dropper Decongestant and Cough
- Robitussin Infant Cough DM Drops
- Triaminic Infant and Toddler Thin Strips Decongestant
- Triaminic Infant and Toddler Thin Strips Decongestant Plus Cough
- Tylenol Concentrated Infants' Drops Plus Cold
- Tylenol Concentrated Infants' Drops Plus Cold and Cough

"To ensure good health: eat lightly, breathe deeply, live moderately, cultivate cheerfulness, and maintain an interest in life"

~William Londen

Homeopathy and the Common Cold

Homeopathy treats the whole person by using minute doses to stimulate the body's own healing mechanisms. Homeopathic remedies are nontoxic, inexpensive, and highly effective when prescribed correctly. These medicines are so highly diluted that they are safe for babies, pregnant woman, and the elderly.

Homeopathy can effectively treat the common cold, shortening the severity and duration of symptoms.

The main homeopathic remedies used for colds are as follows:

Aconitum napellus: is used during the first stage of a cold which develops suddenly. Symptoms are often accompanied by high fever, fear and anxiety. There is a great thirst for cold drinks.

Allium cepa: Made from diluted onion, this remedy has symptoms similar to those you get from chopping fresh onions. A profuse,

watery eye and nasal discharge, which drips like a faucet and burns and irritates the nose. There is rawness in the throat and laryngitis. Painful cough made worse from breathing in cold air. These patients are better in the open air, and worse in a warm room. They may have a strong hunger and thirst.

Belladonna: colds also come on suddenly and violently with a bright red, flushed face, high fever, throbbing headache and extremely red, very sore throat. The symptoms are often right sided. Their pupils may be dilated and their skin hot and dry. Each cough causes more irritation which provokes more coughing. They may be thirstless.

Ferrum phosphoricum: used early when you start to feel you are coming down with something. Symptoms are few besides fever with flushed face, especially with round red spots on the cheeks.

Kali bichromicum: patients have thick, stringy yellow-green nasal discharge and pressure in the sinuses and at the root of the nose, with thick post-nasal drip. This medicine is good for late stage colds. The cough is productive with stringy green sputum. They are chilly and desire sweets.

Pulsatilla: used for a cold with thick, yellow-green mucus. These children are weepy and want to be carried and cuddled, and often times have nighttime coughs. Colds are often accompanied by an ear or eye infection. They feel warm and are worse in a warm, stuffy room, especially at night. *Pulsatilla* patients have emotions that change

often and cry very easily. They often have no thirst.

If your symptoms clearly match one of the remedies listed above:

take one dose (three pills) of a 30C potency, dissolve in the mouth at least twenty minutes away from food or drink. If you don't notice a change, repeat the remedy after four hours. If you have not noticed an improvement after two doses of the medicine, it is not the correct remedy. If your symptoms improve then get worse, take another dose. You should not need to take the correct homeopathic medicine more than three times a day for three days. Do not use coffee, eucalyptus, camphor, menthol, acupuncture or electric blankets while using homeopathic medicines.

This information is meant for educational purposes only and is not intended to replace the services of a qualified medical professional.

You need to consult a qualified homeopath, naturopath, or other physician, if any of the following applies:

- 1) If your symptoms are severe and getting worse.
- 2) If you've tried three different homeopathic remedies for your condition with no success.
- 3) If your symptoms don't match any of these remedies.
- 4) For chronic conditions

FAQ's

What is Naturopathic Medicine?

Naturopathic Medicine is an alternative form of health care where natural therapies are utilized to restore and optimize health.

The philosophical approach of naturopathic medicine includes disease prevention, patient education, and encouragement of the body's natural ability to heal.

Naturopathic Doctors are committed to identifying and treating the cause of disease rather than focusing solely on symptomatic treatment and view each person as a unique individual.

What training do ND's receive?

Naturopathic Doctors (NDs) receive a 4-year postgraduate level training at an accredited naturopathic medical school. The 4-year training includes graduate level study in the medical sciences and clinical medicine; in addition to, training in naturopathic therapeutics. After graduation, NDs must pass a national board examination consisting of basic medical sciences, clinical sciences as well as naturopathic modalities to become licensed doctors.

What therapies do ND's utilize?

Clinical nutrition
Herbal medicine
Homeopathy
Hydrotherapy
Lifestyle counseling

Where can I learn more?

www.naturopathic.org
www.nyanp.org

In the News

Super ear infections resistant to pediatric antibiotics

Located in Rochester, NY, a new super bug that causes acute ear infections in children has emerged that is immune to all antibiotics currently approved for children.

The bacterial strain, *Streptococcus pneumoniae*, has been shown to be highly drug-resistant, and requires either surgery or an antibiotic that has been shown to cause joint damage in young animals and therefore has not been approved for children.

The Journal of the American Medical Association reported a study where of the 212 children diagnosed with an acute ear infection; 59 were *Strep pneumoniae* infections. Of those, the super bug was identified in 15%.

Vitamin D prevents pre-eclampsia

In a recent study from the U of Pittsburgh School of the Health Sciences, the occurrence of pre-eclampsia was noted as being five times higher in women whose Vitamin D measured low during early pregnancy. Researchers also stressed that even slightly low Vitamin D measurements in pregnant women may double the likelihood of having the disorder. Even with prenatal vitamins, pregnant women remain at a high risk for the deficiency.

In another recent study published in the Journal of Nutrition, insufficient levels of Vitamin D were found widespread, affecting more women in northern latitudes. A recent publication from The New England Journal of Medicine also elaborates on the deficiency of this vitamin, which according to the article exposes millions of children and adults to several serious conditions, occasionally fatal, including cancer, infectious diseases and osteoporosis.

Moroccan Eggplant (serves 4)

1 lg onion, sliced	5 cloves garlic, pressed
2 tsp turmeric	½ tsp garam masala
15oz can garbanzo beans	15oz can lentils, drained
½ cup tomato sauce	1¼ cups vegetable broth
½ cup raisins	1 TBS chopped fresh cilantro
1 red bell pepper cut in 1 inch squares	
1 medium eggplant, cut into 1 inch pieces	
pinch of red pepper flakes	
salt & black pepper to taste	

Directions: Heat 1 TBS broth in a 10-12 inch skillet. Saute onion in broth over medium heat for 5 minutes stirring frequently. Add garlic, red bell pepper, eggplant, garam masala, and turmeric. Add broth and tomato sauce. Cover, and cook over medium low heat for 15 minutes, or until peppers and eggplant are tender. Add garbanzo beans, lentils, red chili flakes, and raisins. Simmer for another 5 minutes. Season with salt and pepper. Serve sprinkled with chopped cilantro.