

# HEALTH WATCH

**Real health information to change your life**

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Hi, congratulations on taking the time to educate yourself about ADHD. What we're going to tell you is probably not what you'll hear from the medical or school counselling fraternity BUT **it is backed by the very latest science!**

Firstly, let's be quite clear about what ADHD is and isn't.

ADHD is **not** a disease – it's a condition caused by lifestyle choices that can be altered.

ADHD was **voted** into existence in 1987 by the American Psychiatric Association and inserted in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM). The problem with this is that ADHD has never been shown to be a "chemical imbalance" or a "biological brain abnormality", as parents are so often led to believe. In fact, from 1993 to 1997 Dr. Fred Baughman, a respected US pediatric neurologist, pushed the DEA, the FDA, Ciba-Geigy (makers of Ritalin) and top ADHD researchers to show any scientific proof that ADHD is a disease. None was forthcoming and the U.S. National Institutes of Health now state that there is no independent, valid test for ADHD, and there is no data to indicate that ADHD is due to a brain malfunction.

Psychiatrists made a list of common behaviours that teachers & parents objected to and then labelled them a "disease"! Since then the list has grown to ±18 and any child exhibiting 6 or more of these behaviours is *diagnosed* as suffering from ADHD. Most of the "diagnosing" originates in the classroom and school counsellor offices.

The most common treatment is prescribing Ritalin, which is one of a group of extremely addictive and dangerous drugs. According to the FDA, Ritalin has serious side effects including - *increased blood pressure, heart rate, respiration and temperature; appetite loss; stomach pains; weight loss; growth retardation; nervousness; agitation; irritability; violent & bizarre behaviour; paranoia; hallucinations; facial tics; muscle twitches; insomnia; addiction, suicidal tendencies and even – death!* (one report, funded by the U.S. National Institute of Mental Health, showed that children on Ritalin have a **500% higher** risk of sudden death compared to the norm).

We could go on and list many studies, world wide, pointing to the dangers of giving children drugs like Ritalin, starting as far back as 1998, but what we really want to do is give you the alternatives.

Firstly, we need to accept that, as parents, it's **OUR** responsibility, and not that of the teachers, school counsellors or medical doctors, to take care of our children.

ADHD has been shown, in numerous studies, to have its roots in nutritional deficiencies (diet), and that's the responsibility of parents and in particular – MOMS.

As Patrick Holford says "If you feed your children rocket fuel ..... don't be surprised if their behaviour is out of control!"<sup>1</sup> A diet full of sugar, refined carbohydrates, additives & preservatives isn't good for anyone, especially children. Because of their smaller body mass one teaspoon of sugar, for example, has a far greater effect than it would do on an adult, and yet most kids live on junk foods, sugar laden sweets, cooldrinks, cereals, etc. Is it any wonder that they're experiencing problems?

No car owner would consider putting contaminated fuel and oil into their motor car engine but in our ignorance we allow our kids to put junk into their bodies every day. Surely they are far more valuable than our car engines?

There is a huge body of research, from all over the world, all pointing to the simple fact that, if we improve children's diets, we improve their health, whether it be allergies, eczema & other skin problems, and especially, behavioural and learning problems.

So let's look at a few simple steps a parent can take to improve their ADHD child's behaviour.

Here are three things that can make a profound difference –

- 1) Change the child to a sugar free, low GI diet.
- 2) Eliminate colourants, preservatives & additives from their diet.
- 3) Give them nutritional supplements, including an Omega 3 supplement.

1) Glucose is the main fuel for the brain and refined sugar is easily and speedily converted into glucose by the body. If your child eats a lot of refined sugar (*remember that sugar is hidden in almost every refined food*), then their blood sugar level is going to be fluctuating wildly, shooting up and then dipping down repeatedly throughout the day. Is it any wonder that their levels of concentration, activity and energy will also fluctuate enormously? Dietary studies show that hyperactive children generally eat more sugar than other children<sup>2</sup> and another study showed<sup>3</sup> that reducing dietary sugar reduced disciplinary actions in young offenders.

The best thing a parent can do for their children is to become a label reader – don't buy anything that contains sugar. Give your children fresh fruit, vegetables and fruit juices instead of processed foods and softdrinks.

Refined carbohydrates – white flour, white rice, etc., have a similar effect on blood sugar levels and have the added disadvantage of providing lots of empty calories. Obesity in children is a growing at alarming levels and adds to the ADHD problems. Rather give your children whole grain wheat products and brown rice, which have a low GI (glycemic index – which is a measurement of how fast the sugars in a food are converted into glucose in the body).

Be aware that just because it says "wholegrain" on the box doesn't necessarily means it is. In order to lengthen shelf life, food manufacturers remove the lipids and sterols from grains. These are the oily components which are essential for cellular health but, unfortunately, easily go rancid, so they're removed. An example is wheat germ oil: you can buy any wheat product, whether it be flour, pasta, bread or cereal and you'll not find any wheat germ oil in it.

Food manufacturers, and especially breakfast cereal manufacturers, are not adverse to saying things on the packaging which are not altogether factual. For instance, many cereal boxes say "Preservative Free" when, in fact, they contain BHA (Butylated hydroxyanisole) and BHT (butylated hydroxytoluene). Both these preservatives have question marks regarding their effects on our health. Have you ever stopped to wonder how a breakfast cereal labelled "preservative free" can last for months in the cupboard without going mouldy?

An excellent breakfast for your children is old fashioned oats. Not the precooked "heat in a minute" type but simple rolled oats. Buy from your health store (or possibly your baking supplies store). It makes a very tasty, nutritious breakfast. Simply pour some hot (not boiling) water onto a few spoonfuls of oats and leave it to stand for 5 – 8 minutes. Adding chopped fruit, nuts and seeds means you don't need to sweeten it and oats has the added benefit of being an extremely good source of dietary fibre.

One of the worst things a parent can do for a child is to give them money to buy lunch at school. A good lunch box can make the world of difference to a child. Studies in the UK have shown significant improvements in behaviour and concentration levels when children are given healthy lunchboxes. Include wholegrain sandwiches with peanut butter (make sure you buy one without added sugar), tuna, chicken, egg or cheese fillings. Protein helps to slow the absorption of glucose into the blood stream. Also include fruit and nuts for your child to snack on, and a fruit juice instead of a soda. Be aware that many yogurts and drinking yogurts contain large amounts of sugar – if you are going to give your child yogurt, give them a plain one and chop some fruit into it to sweeten it.

If your child is going to be at school all day make sure they have enough to eat several times during the day. Eating several small meals a day helps to regulate blood sugar levels, preventing the roller coaster effect and stabilizing behaviour.

2) There is overwhelming evidence today showing that preservatives, colourants and additives in food have a detrimental impact on children and especially those labelled as suffering from ADHD.

One study in 2001, by the Hyperactive Children's Support Group in the UK <sup>3</sup> found the following –

89% reacted to food colourings

72% to flavourings

60% to MSG (it is virtually impossible to find a packet of crisps without MSG!)

45% to all synthetic additives

50% to dairy products

60% to chocolate

In addition, preservatives, colourants and additives in food are known to affect allergies, so if your child suffers from allergies it's possible that the allergy is causing or aggravating the behavioural problems.

Become a label reader: buy fresh (or frozen), unprocessed fruits and vegetables, wholegrain breads & pastas, grass fed beef & mutton, and eliminate all processed foods.

3) It's basically impossible to eat a "balanced diet" today and it's totally impossible to get all the nutrients (vitamins, minerals and amino acids) required by a growing child from modern diets. Supplementation is the only way to bridge the gap between what we should be getting and what we actually get. Again, studies show that supplementation helps improve ADHD children's performance.<sup>4</sup> It's essential that your child gets a good quality multivitamin and mineral complex every day. Unfortunately, many of the supplement manufacturers are just as bad as the food manufacturers when it comes to putting additives & preservatives in their supplements. There are children's vitamins with sugar, tartrazine, and other nasties in them. Once again, parents need to read the labels very carefully. Look for supplements that contain vitamins from natural as opposed to synthetic sources. The natural ones are far more bio-available, meaning they are more easily absorbed, giving far better value for your money and, more importantly, better results.

Another critical nutrient for children is Omega 3. Not only is it crucial for brain and eye development in the womb, Omega 3 has also been shown to play an important role in ongoing brain development, assisting in concentration and academic performance.

In one study, children with learning, behaviour and psychosocial difficulties were given an omega supplement or a placebo. Those receiving the omega supplement more than doubled their gain in reading age, and more than tripled their gain in spelling age in a three month period.<sup>6</sup>

Another study, recently featured on the BBC, reported on a very small but remarkable study of children who were given fish oil supplements (Omega 3). The children took tests before they started taking the fish oil and again at the end of three months. During the study, researchers found that the children's reading age increased by a year, their handwriting became more legible and accurate, and they paid more attention in class.

There are literally dozens of studies showing the benefits of Omega 3 and improved brain function in children (it also benefits adults with Alzheimer's, memory loss etc.)

Of 12 double-blind studies on vitamins & IQ with children, 10 show clear improvements, 1 was too short to produce a result and the 12<sup>th</sup> showed a tendency toward improvement.<sup>7</sup> Another study at the University of Reading found that supplements enabled children to work faster & concentrate for longer.<sup>8</sup>

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*Did you know that **VITA SQUARES** from GNLD is a complete multi vitamin & mineral complex that contains no sugar, colourants or preservatives, is all organic & natural and is the only supplement in the world to contain all three of the essential fatty acids critical for cellular nutrition – vital for growing children.*

*GNLD's **LIQUIVITE** contains vitamins, anti-oxidant immune system boosting carotenoids and flavonoids, the three essential fatty acids, amino acids and other nutrients .It is specifically designed for children's rapidly developing systems. Like Vita Squares it is all organic & natural and comes in a tasty citrus flavoured syrup.*

*GNLD's **OMEGA 3** and **OMEGA 3 PLUS** are guaranteed pure (in fact they are health screened for more than 160 pollutants & contaminants, with a tolerance factor of zero!) The potency is also guaranteed and GNLD's omega 3 supplements contain no hidden Vitamin A.*

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With all this scientific information proving to us that ADHD can be controlled by changing a child's diet there is no reason to put them onto dangerous drugs like Ritalin. Parents can, with a little effort, change the food choices that they give their kids and, in doing so, will not only improve their behaviour and concentration levels, but will also set them on a course that will bring long term health benefits. All the chronic diseases afflicting mankind today have their roots in diet. By teaching our children to make good food choices we are helping to protect them from chronic diseases later on in their lives.

*If you've found this information helpful, please pass it on to friends and family. Together we can make a difference in hundreds, and even thousands, of lives!*

<sup>1</sup> Food is better medicine than Drugs – pg 320. Patrick Holford & Jerome Burne

<sup>2</sup> R. J. Prinz *et al.*, 'Dietary Correlates of Hyperactive Behaviour in Children', *Journal of Consulting & Clinical Psychology*, vol 48, 1980 pp 760-9

<sup>3</sup> S.J. Schoenthaler *et al.*, "The Effect of Randomised Vitamin Supplementation....." *Journal of Nutritional and Environmental Medicine*, vol 7 (4), 1997

<sup>5</sup> B. O'Rielly, Hyperactive Children's Support Group Conference, London, June 2001

<sup>6</sup> A. Richardson and P. Montgomery, "The Oxford-Durham Study: A Randomized....." *Pediatrics* vol115 (5), 2005, pp 1360-6

<sup>7</sup> D. Benton, "Micro-Nutrient Supplementation & the Intelligence of Children", *Neuroscience and Behavioural Reviews*", vol 25 (4), 2001, pp 297-309

<sup>8</sup> W. Snowden, *Personality and Individual Differences*, vol. 22 (1), 1997, pp 131-4