

~ ADD / ADHD Newsletter ~

by Naturopath, Nutritionist and Herbalist, Mark Flanigan.

ADD has multiple causes, many of which are outside the parent's control, so this should be of some relief to those who are perhaps blaming themselves for their child's health. Some of the causes include genetics, food allergies/intolerances (particularly to food additives such as 102 and 282, although several others have been implicated as well), heavy metal exposure, illness, blood sugar abnormalities, sleep disturbances, and more.

Natural therapies for ADD include food intolerance testing (and subsequent avoidance of the trigger foods), improving intestinal toxicity, heavy metal detoxification, and supplements such as B vitamins, iron (a common deficiency in children), and others. **Please note:** iron levels should be checked first, as too much iron is toxic.

Studies have shown magnesium supplementation to be beneficial in many cases of hyperactivity - I recommend BioCeuticals UltraMuscleze, Metagenics Fibroplex Plus, or Pharma Foods Nuro Balance, all of which contain an easily absorbed form of magnesium (magnesium diglycinate). Nuro Balance also contains Inositol, which is very valuable for the nervous system. Avoid supplements containing magnesium oxide, which is the magnesium form of rust! (Iron oxide is, of course, rust.) Magnesium oxide is very poorly absorbed and not very well utilized by the body.

Phosphatidylserine is an excellent supplement, and has shown improvement in attention and learning in 90% of subjects in a clinical trial at a dose of 200-300 mg daily for 4 months. DHA, a component of fish oil, is also very beneficial for brain functioning, and has been shown to improve learning and concentration in many cases of ADD.

If you find that avoidance of the chemical 102 (tartrazine) is beneficial, there is a good chance your child is also intolerant to salicylates and glutamates. The foods to avoid that are high in these chemicals include the additive 621 (which is MSG), vegemite, tomato products, gravies, stock cubes, salami's & other processed meats, meat pies, grapes, plums, prunes, raisins, sultanas, broccoli, peanuts and peanut butter, muesli bars, mushrooms and spinach. To assist the detoxification of salicylates, the amino acid Glycine is required for proper metabolism of salicylates by the liver.

Salicylates and tartrazine also lower the body's stores of zinc, so supplementation with this mineral may be beneficial. A simple zinc taste test is a very accurate indicator of zinc levels within the body.

Australian food is very low in Selenium, and this mineral is important for antioxidant function and detoxification. Selenium has been recommended for conditions such as Alzheimer's, dyslexia, epilepsy, dementia, and even schizophrenia. Foods high in selenium include seafood, nuts - especially brazil nuts; garlic, onions, and wholegrain cereals (but avoid those that are high in sugar). Spelt grain is an excellent alternative to wheat.

Bacopa monniera is a very beneficial herb for the nervous system. It has been shown to improve learning, and is even beneficial in cases of nervous breakdown - so may be of assistance for some of those stressed out parents! A clinical trial with Bacopa showed that 12 weeks administration to healthy individuals achieved a 15% improvement in cognitive (mental) function.

Several homeopathic remedies may also be of benefit. Two of these include Gallic Acid (a phenolic-homeopathic remedy available from Metagenics), and Nervoheel (a homeopathic remedy available from Heel).

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