



ADD/ADHD

Natural Methods of Dealing with Attention Deficit Disorder

Today, more and more children are being diagnosed with learning disorders like ADD (attention deficit disorder) and ADHD (attention deficit hyperactive disorder). Typically teachers and schools are pressuring parents to put their children on various drugs in an attempt to solve these problems. For parents who desire them, there are alternative solutions.

One of the major causes of both learning problems and behavioral difficulties in children is hypoglycemia. When there is too much sugar in the brain, children are agitated and overstimulated. When blood sugar levels crash, self-control is lost. You will be amazed at how much calmer children are and how much easier they are to work with when refined sugar, white flour and other simple carbohydrates are reduced or removed from the diet. Just having children eat protein for breakfast instead of sugar-sweetened cereals and other simple carbohydrates can make a big difference.

For kids who constantly crave sweets, licorice root helps stabilize blood sugar levels and reduce sugar cravings. Super Algae supplies amino acids that also help to keep blood sugar stable and nourish the brain. Try two capsules of each in the morning, followed by two more at lunch. Two more can be taken mid-afternoon (after school), if necessary.

Don't substitute artificial sweeteners for sugar either. Food additives, including aspartame, can be linked with hyperactivity and other behavioral disorders. In fact, eliminating food additives from the diet often results in improvement.

Children, like adults, can suffer from anxiety and nervous tension. Chamomile is a good herb for calming the nerves where children are peevish and overreacting to stimuli. It works on adults as well. Matthew Wood, AHG, says chamomile is "for babies of any age." It helps restore a calm, even and "sunny" disposition when taken regularly.

An anti-stress vitamin supplement like NutriCalm will also be helpful where there is anxiety and a lot of nervous tension. Adaptagens like schizandra and nerve tonics like gotu kola or Mind Max may also be helpful. These remedies may be particularly helpful for children with the A blood type as they are more prone to anxiety and stress.

Both licorice and chamomile also work on a deeper problem often present in both hyperactivity and ADD. This is leaky gut syndrome. It works like this: inflammation of the bowel allows the guts to become too permeable and large molecules of irritating substances "leak" into the bloodstream to bombard the liver. This creates feelings of agitation and aggression. Since the gut produces neurotransmitters like serotonin, gut inflammation

will upset the nervous system. Besides licorice and chamomile, Kudzu/St. John's Wort can help reduce gut permeability and Thai-Go can be used to reduce gut inflammation.

Heavy metal poisoning, particularly with lead or mercury, can be another root problem in learning disabilities such as ADHD. These metals may have been introduced into the nervous system through vaccines. Heavy Metal Detox may be helpful in this case.

Essential fatty acids are absolutely essential to brain function since the brain structure is mostly composed of fat. Omega 3 oils, found in Omega 3 EPA and flax seed oil, are often helpful for ADHD children. Super GLA may also be helpful.

There are specific neurotransmitters that calm down excess nervous system reactions. Focus Attention helps to elevate levels of these neurotransmitters and calm down excess activity in the brain, making it very helpful in some cases of ADHD.

In true ADD, there is usually an excess stimulation of the parasympathetic branch of the autonomic nervous system (ANS) and a lack of vitality in the sympathetic branch of the ANS. Anxiety and nervous tension arise from excess sympathetic nervous system activity. Standard nervines (calmatives and relaxants such as hops, skullcap, passion flower and lobelia) tend to activate the parasympathetic nerves and suppress the sympathetic nerves. This actually makes children with true ADD worse. This is why the herbs that calm most people make ADD children more agitated.

Ritalin, and similar drugs used to treat ADD, work because they mimic a neurotransmitter in the sympathetic nervous system called epinephrine. This stimulates the sympathetic nerves and calms the parasympathetic nerves, thus bringing balance. Substances which stimulate the sympathetic nervous system will also be helpful. These include ENER-G-V, licorice root, HistaBlock (which also helps leaky gut) and small amounts of green tea. Note: NSP's green tea extract won't work because it is caffeine-free. Finally, essential oils of citrus (like lemon) also stimulate sympathetic nerves and have a calming effect on ADD and ADHD.

As one can see, there are many natural options to explore before putting a child on drugs to attempt behavior control. For more information on natural options for ADD and ADHD consult an herb specialist or some of the resources below.

Selected References

Herbal Therapy and Supplements by Merrily A. Kuhn and David Winston
The One Spirit Encyclopedia of Complementary Health, Nikki Bradford, Editor
Professional Guide to Conditions, Herbs and Supplements by IntegrativMedicine

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