

ADHD Supplements & Vitamins For Kids

Our diet plays a pivotal role in our physical and mental health.

A well-balanced diet consisting of vitamins, minerals, healthy fats, etc., can provide our bodies with everything it needs to feel great and function at a high level.

However, a bad diet can cause our health to deteriorate.

For example, eating fast food exposes our bodies to artificial colorings and processed sugars that can have detrimental behavioral and physical effects, including weight gain, tooth decay, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, [depression](#), and may even impact cognitive functioning.

These effects are especially harmful to individuals suffering from ADD/ADHD and Autism, as ingredients like processed sugar can exacerbate the negative symptoms of these disorders by disrupting neurotransmitters in the brain.

At the Drake Institute, [brain map-guided neurofeedback](#) (EEG-Biofeedback) is our primary method for treating ADHD; however, eating a proper diet and utilizing ADHD supplements can help enhance improvements generated by our non-drug treatment protocols, especially for kids.

In this article, we'll further explain the relationship between diet and ADHD, how parents can use vitamins for kids with ADHD to improve the results of [non-drug ADHD treatments](#), and how the Drake Institute uses non-drug, non-invasive treatment protocols to help our patients achieve symptom relief.

The Effects Of A Poor Diet On ADD & ADHD

Processed foods are jam-packed with artificial colors and sugars, which can be detrimental to the health of both children and adults.

An improper diet can also compromise our gut health, which plays an important role in helping to protect our physical and mental health.

Decreasing your ADHD child's intake of foods containing these potentially harmful ingredients may improve his or her behavioral symptoms and provide several important health benefits.

Battling Sugar Cravings

The sugar found in many soft drinks, juices, candy bars, etc., can dysregulate brain function (e.g., increased dopamine levels).

The effect of sugar is so powerful, that studies have shown mice prefer sugar over cocaine.[i]

For many years, parents have told our staff how their child with ADHD craves sugar, and in response, the parents sometimes have attempted to substitute sugar with artificial sweeteners such as Aspartame and Saccharine.

However, the Drake Institute does not recommend substituting sugar with artificial sweeteners, as Aspartame and Saccharine may cause some individuals to experience learning problems, headaches, and other side effects. [ii]

To improve ADHD symptoms, it's best to limit how much sugar your child is consuming, and if possible, to remove it from your child's diet altogether.

Artificial Food Colorings

Artificial food colorings can also affect your child's behavior, which can make shopping for your ADHD child at the grocery store quite difficult once you leave the produce aisle.

Making matters worse is the fact that companies market sodas and other sugary snacks to children, which are often the worst offenders when it comes to using food dyes and artificial colorings.

That said, it's still critical that parents attempt to eliminate or minimize these types of processed foods from their child's diet, as their removal may help reduce their child's ADHD symptoms.

Gut Health

Foods containing high amounts of sugar, artificial food colorings, and toxic preservatives can compromise the health of our gut, leading to poorer overall health.

Additionally, there are non-food factors that can negatively impact gut flora, including childbirth by cesarean delivery and antibiotics (this is not to suggest to avoid cesarean delivery or antibiotics when necessary).

Our gut microbiota (gut flora) is composed of many microorganisms that support our physical and mental health, immune system functioning, brain development, and the synthesis of neurotransmitters.

Interestingly, children with ADD and ADHD tend to have a greater prevalence of gastrointestinal symptoms.

Probiotics, such as Lactobacillus and Bifidobacterium, can improve gut flora, and parents should also consider including foods such as yogurt into their child's diet which can have a beneficial effect on the gut flora.

One of the best ways to protect gut health is to eliminate processed foods from our diets, as this ensures that our gut can fully reap the benefits of probiotic supplementation and healthy eating.

ADHD Diet Plan

In a lecture for continuing medical education for physicians, Dr. Anna Esparham of the Department of Pediatrics at the University of Kansas Medical Center presented many significant findings for helping patients with ADHD and Autism Spectrum Disorders, including recommendations that early healthy nutrition, sustained through adolescence, is most important in promoting long-term brain development and functioning.

A [proper ADHD diet plan](#) should resemble and mimic any other diet plan that focuses on the consumption of nutrient-dense foods that do not contain excessive amounts of sugar and artificial colorings or sweeteners.

Additionally, supplements can be taken under the guidance of a medical professional to help battle any deficiencies that may be present; however, it is recommended that individuals suffering from ADD or ADHD first try to

obtain their essential minerals and nutrients through the consumption of healthy foods.

ADHD Vitamins & Supplements

ADHD vitamins and supplements, in conjunction with a healthy diet, can be a powerful tool for achieving symptom relief, especially for individuals who are having difficulty getting adequate amounts of vitamins and minerals from their diets.

To help alleviate the symptoms of ADHD, the Drake Institute recommends the following supplements for ADHD.

Essential Trace Minerals

The 3 essential trace minerals that have been studied the most and which are very important for brain development and functioning are zinc, iron, and magnesium.

Again, it's important to note that any treatment plan that includes vitamin or mineral supplementation should first include a consultation with a medical professional.

1. Zinc

Individuals suffering from ADD and ADHD can be zinc deficient, and taking a zinc supplement may be helpful in achieving symptom relief.

Zinc is called a "cofactor" in neurotransmission, and it plays an important role in the healing of tissue and immune system functioning.

Zinc also protects the gut barrier and the blood-brain barrier, and if one has a zinc deficiency, it can cause dysfunction of these barriers.

One study showed that zinc improved hyperactivity and impulsivity, but not the symptoms of inattention.

Doctors and Pediatricians can test for low zinc levels and guide supplementation if zinc levels are found to be low.

2. Iron

Iron is another cofactor in the production and metabolism of neurotransmitters, and an iron deficiency can affect dopamine metabolism.

Dopamine is a key neurotransmitter, and a deficiency can cause restless legs syndrome, sleeping problems, and sometimes fatigue and tachycardia (elevated heart rate).

Low ferritin (a protein that stores iron in the body and releases it) and abnormal iron indices are seen in ADHD children, particularly in children who are experiencing sleeping problems.

ADHD children, who are taking [stimulant medications](#), could also have an increased risk for iron deficiency, as these medications tend to suppress the child's appetite, leading to malnourishment.

3. Magnesium

Finally, magnesium is the third essential trace mineral and is involved in more than 300 enzymatic reactions in the body, including

- Bone Metabolism & Growth
- Nerve Function
- Neurotransmitter Release
- Immune System Functioning
- Regulation Of The Hypothalamic-Pituitary-Adrenal Axis

Clinical symptoms of magnesium deficiency in children include irritability, anxiety, and agitation.

Magnesium supplementation can reduce anxiety and irritability through its

calming effect, which can be instrumental in helping ADHD children complete their daily tasks.

Fatty Acid Supplementation

In addition to supplementing essential trace minerals, supplementing with Omega-3 fatty acids can also help mitigate the effects of ADD and ADHD.

Every cell in our body (including our brain) is made up of fats. In fact, the brain is composed of as much as 60% lipids.

To improve brain functioning, research has shown that in children with ADHD whose blood levels of omega-3 are low, Omega-3 fatty acid supplementation is just as effective for ADHD as stimulant drugs for improving attention but without the possible drug side-effects. [iii]

That is an amazing statistic when you consider that Omega-3 fatty acids are not a drug, but are instead dietary healthy fats (Transactional Psychiatry, online November 20, 2019).

Vitamin B & C

Finally, supplementing vitamins B and C can also help alleviate ADD and ADHD symptoms.

Vitamin C, like zinc, iron, and magnesium, is used to produce neurotransmitters like dopamine.

Additionally, vitamin B deficiency is linked to irritability and fatigue in children.

When both of these vitamins reach optimal levels, individuals with ADHD can experience increased alertness and decreased anxiety, which can help ADHD children focus on their tasks and decrease their hyperactivity.

Do ADHD Vitamins Work?

ADHD vitamins can mitigate the negative side effects of ADHD when used in conjunction with a healthy diet.

And by improving your child's diet, you can increase the benefits received from other treatment programs, like the non-drug ADHD treatment program provided by the Drake Institute.

That said, nutrition by itself may not be enough for some individuals to experience significant symptom relief. In these cases, we recommend non-drug clinical interventions, like Neurofeedback and Neurostimulation for ADHD.

Combining Diet with Clinical Treatment

At the Drake Institute, we advocate evidence-based, proven medical treatment programs like Neurofeedback and [Neuromodulation](#), which utilize the brain's resources, do not require drugs and are capable of reducing or resolving the symptoms of ADHD.

Our ADHD treatments are non-drug, non-invasive, and designed to "retrain the brain" for long term improvement, as opposed to simply medicating to control symptoms.

One of the best ways to help fully support our treatment process is to implement an improved diet for kids with ADD and ADHD, as this increases the likelihood that your child will have the best possible long-term results from brain map guided neurofeedback.

While our neurofeedback treatment programs can provide patients with sustainable, long-term symptom improvement or resolution, the treatment tends to work better, and faster, when combined with an optimized diet.

In addition to ADD and ADHD symptom improvement, proper diets provide a

wealth of other health benefits for parents and their children.

Creating and sustaining a healthy diet should be a priority for all families, regardless of whether or not someone in the family is suffering from a related disorder like ADHD.

Get Help at the Drake Institute Today

Get help for you or your loved ones by contacting us to arrange a screening consultation at no charge.

[i] <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1931610/>

[ii] <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/28198207/>

[iii] <https://www.pennmedicine.org/updates/blogs/metabolic-and-bariatric-surgery-blog/2011/december/get-the-facts-about-healthy-fats>

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