

# Non-drug options for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

## Taking the holistic approach; diet changes

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An article in the June 17th, 2008, issue of *The New York Times* states that almost a third of the 2.5 million children in the US who have been prescribed stimulant drugs for attention and hyperactivity disorders (ADHD) have experienced troubling side effects, including decreased appetite and weight loss, insomnia, personality changes, and abdominal pain.

Since 2006, the US Food and Drug Administration has required that stimulants used in the treatment of ADHD (including Adderall, Ritalin, and Concerta) carry warnings of the risk for sudden death, heart attacks, and hallucinations in some patients. It's not surprising, then, that as many as two-thirds of children diagnosed with ADHD have been given some form of alternative treatment.

### Seeking alternatives to prescription drugs

Most doctors will advise parents that scientific research has not yet substantiated the value of alternative treatments for ADHD, and will term reports of their efficacy "purely anecdotal". Keep in mind that the lack of scientific validation for a treatment doesn't necessarily mean that the treatment doesn't work; the studies simply may not have been performed.

It may take some effort, but parents who wish to pursue a holistic approach to ADHD treatment can find a paediatrician willing to try alternatives. Remember that every child is an individual, with his or her own body chemistry and physiology; be prepared to spend some time (and money) trying the different approaches to find

ones that help. And if you need a second opinion when you think you see improvement in your child, remember that your child's teacher may be your most objective judge. Following are some non-drug options.

### Herbal therapy

Among the herbs suggested for treatment of ADHD are St John's wort, echinacea, ginkgo biloba, and ginseng. It is best to undertake herbal therapy under the guidance of a naturopathic physician, since herbs can have their own side effects if misused.

In the system of traditional Chinese medicine, herbal preparations are typically compounded for the individual patient, based on his or her particular symptoms. The Shaanxi College of Tra-

ditional Chinese Medicine in Xiayang and the Paediatric Dept. of the Affiliated Hospital of Shandong College of TCM in Jinan have reported on the positive effects of two herbal formulas for ADHD treatment.



**Lack of scientific validation doesn't mean that the treatment doesn't work**

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At the Affiliated Hospital of Guangzhou College of TCM, a Chinese herbal formula was compared to a Western medicine approach (Ritalin) in a side-by-side clinical trial. The herbal formula performed as well

as Ritalin in that trial, with fewer side effects.

### Vitamins and supplements

Research has found that some children with ADHD are deficient in magnesium, iron, zinc, and/or vitamin B6. Megadoses of vitamins are controversial, but a good multiple vitamin is a safe and reasonable approach to treating such deficiencies. There is also a growing body of evidence that omega-3 fatty acids, found in fish and fish oil, can be helpful to children with ADHD (reported in 2007 in the *Journal of the Paediatric Clinics of North America*).

### Homeopathic remedies

A double-blind study published in the *British Homeopathic Journal* gave 43 children with ADHD either a homeopathic treatment or a placebo for ten days. Researchers found that those who were given homeopathic medicines showed significantly fewer signs of ADHD behaviour than those given placebos.

Two months after the study's end, 57 per cent of the children who showed improvement with homeopathy had continued to improve, even though they had discontinued the homeopathic medicines; 24 per cent relapsed by the time of the follow-up; and the remaining 19 per cent continued to experience positive results, but only while taking the homeopathic medicines. The homeopathic medicines found to be most helpful for ADHD were Stramonium, Cina, and Hyoscymus niger.

In biofeedback therapy, children with ADHD wear electrodes on their head and learn to control video games by exercising the parts of the brain related to attention and focus. Research to date suggests not only that children enjoy this therapy;



**UNIQUE PROGRAMME:** A four-week summer camp in Connecticut, US provides the structure, discipline, and social order necessary for children who suffer from ADHD

it actually works as well as medication. Clinical studies published in the *Journal of Neurotherapy* have revealed that as many as 86 per cent of ADHD subjects show improvement in attention, impulse control, and information processing speed after such sessions, as well as a reduction in problems associated with ADHD such as seizures, nightmares, bed-wetting, and depression.

### Allergy treatment

Food allergies and environmental allergies can cause abnormal learning patterns and symptoms in children. If you suspect that your child may have an allergy, testing or an elimination diet may be in order. Since cow's milk is often the culprit in kids' allergies, try removing all milk products for at least a month and watch for signs of improvement. Other suspect

foods are wheat, corn, soy, eggs, citrus, and peanuts.

Environmental problems such as moulds, dust, chemicals used for cleaning, perfumes, pesticides, and other toxins can also cause children to develop allergies and display behaviours associated with the ADD/ADHD label. Make sure that your home and your child's school are not environmentally sick.

## ON THE PULSE

DR JOHN BRIFFA



## Protein rich diet can speed metabolic rate

I make no secret of the fact that I favour protein-rich diets, particularly where weight loss and weight maintenance is concerned. Last month a study found that a protein-rich diet was better for maintaining weight loss than a diet rich in carbohydrate [1].

In this particular study, the protein-rich diet had been supplemented with either casein or whey-derived protein. I was therefore interested to read a recently-published study which used two different amounts of casein to see what effect this had on a range of measurements that have some relationship to body weight [2].

### Two types of diet

In this study, 24 adults (average age 25) were tested with two different diets on separate days. One of these con-

weight, it's more than mere calories that count. The form of the calories in this study appeared to have a significant impact on metabolic rate, and this has clear and important implications for those who are seeking to lose weight or maintain a healthy weight.

The setting of this study was very controlled, and really does not mimic what happens in the real world. However, it does clearly show that there may be some "metabolic advantage" in eating a diet rich in protein if weight loss is the aim. Eating a diet rich in protein may help to enhance the rate at which protein is broken down and remade in the body (protein turnover), and this may have a positive influence on metabolic rate [3]. In addition, a protein rich diet helps to preserve muscle mass, which also helps to maintain metabolic rate.



**It's more than mere calories that count**

### Protein more satisfying

While the form of calories appears important in terms of its impact on body weight, the total number of calories also has some bearing here. Interestingly, the higher protein diet utilised in this study was found to be more satisfying than the lower protein one, echoing previous work which has found that protein has generally greater appetite-satisfying effect than carbohydrate or fat. Again, the implications of this with regard to weight loss are obvious.

References:  
1. Claessens M, et al. The effect of a low-fat, high-protein or high-carbohydrate ad libitum diet on weight loss maintenance and metabolic risk factors. *Int J Obes (Lond)*. 20 Jan 2009 [Epub ahead of print]

tained more protein and less fat than the other. The protein rich diet had 25 per cent of calories in the form of protein (casein), with 20 and 55 per cent of calories coming from fat and carbohydrate respectively. The lower protein diet had just 10 per cent of calories coming from protein, with fat and carb making up 35 and 55 per cent of calories respectively. For each of the study subjects, total calorie intake was the same on each diet.

For each diet, individuals spent 36 hours living in a "respiration chamber", which allowed analysis of a range of things including energy expenditure and metabolic rate. The higher protein diet, compared to the lower-protein one, led to higher total energy expenditure, which seemed to be related to a higher metabolic rate during sleep.

'More than mere calories' These findings strongly suggest that when it comes to the impact food has on body

2. Hochstenbach-Waelen A, et al. Comparison of 2 diets with either 25% or 10% of energy as casein on energy expenditure, substrate balance, and appetite profile. *AJCN*. Epub ahead of print 28 January 2009

3. Krieger JW, et al. Effects of variation in protein and carbohydrate intake on body mass and composition during energy restriction. *Am J Clin Nutr* 2006; 83(2):260-74  
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## ADVERTISEMENT FEATURE: MIND MATTERS



## The power of the subconscious mind

Imagine that your subconscious mind is like the software on your computer. It controls how you feel, how you react to situations, your views about yourself, what and when you eat, even down to the colours of the clothes you chose to wear. In short, it is the operating system of your life.

It works the way it does because it has been "programmed" by our life experiences and memories. It doesn't have its own agenda, it simply processes the information the way it goes in - good or bad. Unfortunately, if the latter is the case, this will influence our experience of daily life - rubbish in means rubbish out.

However, we are not helpless and are able to change our subconscious reactions, if we really want to.

A part of the process of our subconscious mind is to look after all the automotive body responses, like walking to the bathroom or the way you stand in the shower. You don't



**Rubbish in means rubbish out**

have to think about it - it happens automatically - but it also determines how you feel as you stand there, happy, sad or anxious, for example.

A lot of the learnt programming which influences our subconscious comes from our childhood, but it continues to develop as we grow up. We tend to absorb negative conditioning - you're no good; you're fat; your brother is cleverer than you; you are stupid; you don't deserve anything nice.

Negative conditioning produces negative attitudes and impacts on the way we live our lives. We find ourselves believ-

ing that "the only important thing in life is money"; "my relationships always fail"; "I feel better when I eat"; "smoking relaxes me"; "drink makes me feel more confident". They become habits - a way of living - they become who we are, and influence how we think, feel and perceive ourselves.

Over time, this grows to be more than a habit, and becomes our "writing on the wall", which effectively defines us and what we believe about ourselves.

The good news is that we can change by using the power of our own subconscious minds. Hypnosis works with your subconscious mind to rewrite the software programme to achieve a new positive outcome. By going back to the initial programming from childhood onwards, a qualified hypnotherapist can negate the influence of the past on the way you live your life. The effects can be life changing. Hypnosis has been proven to help with a huge range of complaints including stress, anxiety, depression, phobias such as fear of flying, stopping smoking, weight control, drug/alcohol abuse and insomnia.

Hypnosis will help you to change your old habitual responses as long as this is what you really want. Unlike what stage hypnotists would like you to believe, hypnosis cannot make you do anything you do not want to do. It is safe and drug free. When our subconscious mind is not acting in our best interests, we can turn this around by using its own power with the help of hypnosis and rewrite the negative programming in a more positive way.

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## Move of the week: side bends on the ball

TYSAN LERNER  
EPOCH TIMES STAFF

Keeping our core strength intact helps protect us from injury and pain.

We have both internal and external obliques. Our obliques are part of our abdominal family of muscles. In this exercise they are supposed to work together. If you find your shoulders or hips pulling forward or back, you may have an imbalance of strength between your oblique muscles. This imbalance is often found

among people who are continually turning to one side.

This exercise also works your quadratus lumborum. If you find that one hip is higher than the other throughout the day, you should talk to a qualified fitness professional before performing this exercise because it may aggravate your quadratus lumborum, thus causing back pain.

### Exercise instructions

Lean the side of your body over the ball, with your top leg in front. Place your hands behind your head and inhale as you lift your

upper body into a side bend. Exhale as you return to the starting position. Repeat 10 times.

### Primary movers

Obliques  
Quadratus lumborum

### Key points

Keep navel pulled in to ensure stability of the hips and lower back muscles.  
Keep ears, shoulders, and hips in line with each other.  
Keep the hipbones on the same vertical plane.  
Do not let the top of your hip roll forward or backward.



SIDE BENDS ON THE BALL



KEEP THE NAVAL PULLED IN



## The mystery of meridians

CHINA RESEARCH GROUP

The theory of meridians is a mystery to science. How did Chinese medicine discover the meridians? What is the function of meridians? What do recent studies on meridians tell us?

The meridian theory has a long history and has been continuously developed in classical Chinese medical practice. As early as 2,000 years ago, the Inner Canon of the Yellow Emperor (Huangdi Neijing) had systematically recorded the placement of the meridians.

Chinese medicine believes that meridians are what access the body's qi. Meridians are attached to viscera and spread throughout the body.

The meridian system has played an important role in physiology, pathology, and disease prevention. Ancient Chinese medical scientists believed that life is part of the universe, and a harmonious relationship should be maintained between heaven and all things on earth.

This view guided ancient Chinese medicine and was connected closely with physics, astronomy, geography, and philosophy. Modern medicine is unable to understand meridians.

Many express doubts about the existence of meridians and qi. In fact, all people have meridians. Although they cannot be seen

or touched, under certain conditions they can be sensed. Chinese scientists have found that about one per cent of people are meridian-sensitive.

Chinese scientists have tested the objectivity of the meridian system using modern scientific experiments. A scientist from the Chinese Academy of Sciences devised a highly sensitive instrument and found that meridians are in the form of lines that give out luminescence. They emitted 2.5 times more photons than non-meridian points on the body.

Meridians are points, normally forming lines, on the human body where electrical resistance is lower than adjacent areas. When injecting a trace element into a meridian, the trace element will travel through the meridians into the body and then diffuse.

Professor Li Dingzhong, a famous Chinese skin scientist and expert on meridians, observed 305 cases of skin diseases where lesions occurred along a meridian line. The discovery caused a great shock to the international medical profession. His book *Meridian Phenomenon* was published in Japan.

Meridian research is still a phenomenological study, and it is far from being able to clearly show the meridians and qi. It is far from being able to reveal the meridians' mysteries.

Once these mysteries are solved, a new scientific revolution will be inevitable.