

Diet for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

This is my basic eating program for ADD/ADHD kids. It is not a very strict program, unless you are used to having most meals at your local fast food restaurant, in which case it is time to change your habits anyway!

This program is recommended for every member of the family. It's not just an ADD program. It's the same program that I encourage for everyone from athletes to business executives - for optimized performance, with only minor changes.

It helps about 50-60% of the kids that try it. The most common feedback that we get from parents is, "Well, it helped my kid somewhat, but I really feel great!" Results fall into a "Bell Curve." A few do great, a few are completely unaffected, and most do somewhat better but it is not enough as a stand-alone intervention. Please have realistic expectations. But please try it. It just may be a big help to your family. If this is not working 100% for your family, try avoiding all the foods high in salicylates listed in the Feingold Diet handout.

Additionally, you will want to consider other nutraceutical support and also the possibility of counseling to assist with brain reprogramming. Your parenting, as well-intentioned as you might be!, may also be playing a role.

For the first TWO WEEKS:

1. NO DAIRY PRODUCTS, especially cow's milk. This is the single most important restriction. Instead try Almond milk or Rice milk. Drink water instead of milk. In fact, drink lots of water. The brain is about 80% water, and increasing your water intake to 7 to 10 glasses per day might be helpful all by itself. Pop, Gatorade, teas, etc., do not count as water. Water counts as water.
2. NO YELLOW FOODS: not just those with yellow food dyes, Even corn and squash. Bananas are white. Don't eat the peel. ☺
3. NO JUNK FOODS. If it comes in a non-compostable wrapper, don't eat it.
4. NO FRUIT JUICES. The sugar content is too high. One small glass of apple juice has the sugar content of eight apples. Later on you can have juice, but dilute it with water 50/50.
5. CUT SUGAR INTAKE BY 90%. If you can, cut it down to zero. Sugar is in just about everything, but give it a try. Do your best without going crazy.
6. CUT CHOCOLATE BY 90%. No more than a single piece, once a week.
7. NO NUTRASWEET/ ASPARTAME/ SPLENDA/ ETC. None. Period.
8. NO PROCESSED MEATS and NO MSG. Only get meats with labels that say, "Turkey and Water," etc. If the meat has chemicals listed that you can't pronounce, don't buy it.

9. CUT FRIED FOODS BY 90%.

10. AVOID FOOD COLORINGS. See if your child is sensitive to any particular colors, such as Reds, Yellows, etc. but as a general rule for a healthy brain avoid them.

SUMMARY: Try eating foods the way mother nature gave them to us: if you can imagine how it was grown (rice, vegetables, fruits) or raised (chicken, beef) it is likely safe to eat. If you can't imagine how it possibly got into the form you are consuming (from pop tarts to processed breakfast cereal)

AFTER TWO WEEKS begin adding these foods back into your diet, one food every other day. Eat A LOT of that food every day for four days. If you have a problem with one of the foods, you will see some kind of a "reaction" within four days. The reaction can vary from big red splotches on the body to ears turning bright red to explosive temper outbursts. If there's a problem, you'll know. If there's no problem, enjoy the food IN MODERATION. Other than organic dairy products, pure unsweetened fruit juice and squash, these foods are not health promoting foods! (ok... chocolate isn't so evil!)

What TO
eat...

WHAT TO EAT TO FEED THE BRAIN:

1) FOR BREAKFAST SERVE HIGH PROTEIN, LOW CARBOHYDRATE MEALS. Say, "Good-bye," to Breakfast cereals and milk. Serve 60% Protein and 40% Carbohydrates for Breakfast. Other meals should be 50% / 50%.

2) PROTEIN SUPPLEMENTS might be needed to get the added protein for Breakfast. They are often very helpful in the afternoon as well. Here is our favorite recipe for a Protein Shake:

a) Make a cup of coffee, using one of General Mills' International Coffees, or something like that, with a flavor that you or your child will like (yes, I know I'm breaking my own rules here, as these coffees have dried milk and some sugar, but I'm trying to get your kid to actually drink the thing, and also get some caffeine mixed with the protein.). Pour the hot coffee into a blender with about 6 oz of ice. Turn on the blender for a bit.

b) Add a good quality protein powder. There are many good ones available. If you can't find one that you like, ask at your local health food store. Get protein powders that are mostly protein and very little carbohydrate. Add between 15 and 20 grams of protein to the cold coffee in the blender.

c) Turn on the blender again.

d) Drink it up.

This protein shake is helpful for a lot of people. For many small kids, and many adults, this recipe works about as well as a small dose of Ritalin (100 mg of caffeine is roughly the same as 5 mg of Ritalin). So many who might just take a small dose of Ritalin might get away with just doing this.

Don't forget, though, that even caffeine can have some side effects. Every once in a while we find someone that has problems with the caffeine in the coffee. Usually, though, the caffeine in the coffee helps the person to focus better. The protein helps to feed the brain. If you find this helpful, have one with Breakfast, and one around 3 pm. If it is not helpful, then don't bother with it.

3) MINERAL SUPPLEMENTS may be helpful. Colloidal Minerals or fully chelated minerals are the best. Don't buy minerals in the grocery store. Visit your health food store for good quality minerals.

4) FLAX SEED or FISH OIL. High sources of Omega oils. Borage oils and evening primrose oils are good as well. Very important. Mix about a spoonful a day into foods as you prepare them, or add to salad dressings, etc.

6) EAT LOTS OF FRUITS AND VEGETABLES. Avoid Aluminum exposure. Eat in a healthy manner.