

The Wellness Exchange

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What is ADHD?

What is Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder?

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, ADHD, is one of the most common mental disorders that develop in children. Children with ADHD have impaired functioning in multiple settings, including home, school, and in relationships with peers. If untreated, the disorder can have long-term adverse effects into adolescence and adulthood.

Signs & Symptoms

Symptoms of ADHD will appear over the course of many months, and include:

- *Impulsiveness*: a child who acts quickly without thinking first.
- *Hyperactivity*: a child who can't sit still, walks, runs, or climbs around when others are seated, talks when others are talking.
- *Inattention*: a child who daydreams or seems to be in another world, is sidetracked by what is going on around him or her.

How is it Diagnosed?

If ADHD is suspected, the diagnosis should be made by a professional with training in ADHD. This includes child psychiatrists, psychologists, developmental/behavioral pediatricians, behavioral neurologists, and clinical social workers. After ruling out other possible reasons for the child's behavior, the specialist checks the child's school and medical records and talks to teachers and parents who have filled out a behavior rating scale for the child. A diagnosis is made only after all this information has been considered.

Treatment

For children with ADHD, no single treatment is the answer for every child. A child may sometimes have undesirable side effects to a medication that would make that particular treatment unacceptable. Each child's needs and personal history must be carefully considered.

Simple Behavioral Interventions

- **Schedule.** Have the same routine every day, from wake-up time to bedtime. The schedule should include homework time and playtime (including outdoor recreation and indoor activities such as computer games). Have the schedule on the refrigerator or a bulletin board in the kitchen. If a schedule change must be made, make it as far in advance as possible.



- **Organize** needed everyday items. Have a place for everything and keep everything in its place. This includes clothing, backpacks, and school supplies.

- **Use** homework and notebook organizers. Stress the importance of writing down assignments and bringing home needed books.

For more on the information presented:

<http://www.nimh.nih.gov>

<http://www.cdc.gov>

Tips for Parents

- Recognize the importance of healthy peer relationships for children. These relationships can be just as important as grades to school success.
- Maintain on-going communication with people who play important roles in your child's life. Keep up-dated on your child's social development in community and school settings.
- Involve your child in activities with his or her peers. Communicate with other parents, sports coaches and other involved adults about any progress or problems that may develop with your child.
- Peer programs can be helpful, particularly for older children and teenagers. You may want to discuss the possibility of your child's participation with program directors and your child's care providers (<http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/adhd/peer.htm>)

March is National Nutrition Month

Your eating habits are actually guideposts that can help you understand as much about your psychological health as your physical health. Eating a healthy diet demonstrates strong statements about self-esteem and self-respect. The fuel we put into our body has direct bearing on our feeling of well-being and can even be a consequence of illness when we eat poorly.

The Food Pyramid

The USDA recently retired the old food pyramid and replaced it with MyPyramid, a new symbol and the “interactive food guidance system,” (www.mypyramid.gov).



Orange = Grains

Make half your grains whole. Eat at least 3 ounces of whole grain bread, cereal, crackers, rice and pasta daily. Look for “whole” before the grain name on the list of ingredients.

Green = Vegetables

Vary your veggies. Eat more dark green veggies. Eat more orange veggies. Eat more dry beans and peas.

Red = Fruits

Focus on fruits. Eat a variety of fruits. Choose fresh, frozen, canned or dried fruit. Go easy on fruit juices.

Yellow = Oils

Know your fats. Make most of your fat sources from fish, nuts, and vegetable oils. Limit solid fats like butter, stick margarine, shortening, and lard.

Blue = Milk

Get your calcium-rich foods. Go low fat or fat free. If you can't or don't consumer milk, try lactose free products and other calcium sources.

Purple = Meat & Beans

Go lean on protein. Choose low fat or lean meats and poultry. Vary your choices with more fish, beans, peas, nuts and seeds.

Shop Smart

Become a smart shopper by reading food labels to find out more about the foods you eat! Here's why it's smart to check out the Nutrition Facts found on most food labels:

- Find out which foods are good sources of fiber, calcium, iron, and vitamin C
- Compare similar foods to find out which one is lower in fat and calories
- Search for low-sodium foods
- Look for foods that are low in saturated fat and trans fats

Use these tips to help you make healthy food choices that meet your nutritional goals (www.eatright.org).



What Does That Mean?

Ever wonder about the difference between reduced fat and low fat? Or does “light” on a label really mean no fat? FDA has strict guidelines on how these food label terms can be used. Here are some of the most common claims seen on food packages and what they mean:

- *Low calorie* – Less than 40 calories per serving.
- *Low cholesterol* – Less than 20 mg of cholesterol and 2 gm or less of saturated fat per serving.
- *Reduced* – 25% less of the specified nutrient or calories than the usual product.
- *Good source of* – Provides at least 10% of the daily value of a particular vitamin or nutrient per serving.
- *Calorie free* – Less than 5 calories per serving.
- *Fat free / sugar free* – Less than 1/2 gram of fat or sugar per serving.
- *Low sodium* – Less than 140 mg of sodium per serving.
- *High in* – Provides 20% or more of the Daily Value of a specified nutrient per serving.
- *High fiber* – 5 or more grams of fiber per serving.
- *Lean (meat, poultry, seafood)* – 10 grams of fat or less, 4 1/2 grams of saturated fat, and less than 95 mg cholesterol per 3 ounce serving.
- *Light* – 1/3 fewer calories or 1/2 the fat of the usual food.
- *Healthy* – Decreased fat, saturated fat, sodium, and cholesterol and at least 10% of the DV of vitamins A, C, iron, protein, calcium, and fiber.



For more on the information above, please visit:
www.mypyramid.gov
www.eatright.org