THE BETTER HEALTH NEWS

CHILDREN AND VITAMIN D

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ADHD, NUTRITION May be a good Place to start

IMPROVE LEARNING, 4 Memory and Grades

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A SURPRISING WAY To Help Your Child's Immune System

There are a number of children's health issues that can be connected to a need for vitamin D. For one thing, vitamin D levels may be connected to cognition and mental health. A study involving 104 adolescents was published in BMC Psychiatry (2012 May 9; 12(1):38). The subjects were receiving acute mental health treatment over a 16-month period. Researchers found a relationship between vitamin D deficiency and psychotic features, with 72% of the subjects having insufficient vitamin D. According to research appearing in the Journal of Neurology, Neurosurgery, and Psychiatry (May 21, 2009), men with higher vitamin D levels outperformed men with low vitamin D levels in tests of attention and in the speed of processing information. Subjects of the study were 3,369 men who were participating in the Male Aging Study. High vitamin D levels were associated with better performance on a test of psychomotor speed and visual scanning. The vitamin D performance connection was especially evident in the older participants.

Activated vitamin D reduces inflammatory chemicals (cytokines) and increases the effectiveness of certain white blood cells. It stimulates potent anti microbial peptides found in white blood cells and in the cells lining the respiratory tract. Research in the British journal, Epidemiology and Infection (2006 Dec: 134(6):1129-40) propose that the reason flu season is in the winter may be because low sunlight and low vitamin D levels. Cod liver oil, a source of vitamin D, reduces the incidence of viral infections. Treating children with vitamin D reduced the incidence of respiratory infections. Vitamin D may even be beneficial to patients with asthma and allergies. A study that was published in Allergy, Asthma & Immunology Research (2013 Sept; 5(5): 283-8) looked at the relationship between vitamin D levels and asthma severity. When the population was stratified by vitamin D status, 91% of asthmatic patients with vitamin D levels below 20 ng/mL and 74% of patients with vitamin D levels between 20 and 30 ng/mL had severe asthma versus 50% of those with vitamin D sufficiency. Vitamin D insufficiency was associated with a higher risk of severe asthma. High vitamin D levels were associated with a lower risk of hospitalization or emergency department visits .

ADHD: NUTRITION MAY BE A GOOD PLACE TO START

Various nutritional approaches may remains ADHD. Nutrition help controversial because scientific studies, by their very nature, look at a single constituent. The paradigm in medicine is to try to find a "cure", one thing that fixes the symptom. There is an inherent flaw in this way of thinking because it assumes that any health problem has one cause. If the problem, as some research suggests, is due to a lack of serotonin, then many factors can come into play. You need protein and the amino acid tryptophan to make serotonin. You also need folic acid, vitamin B₆, vitamin C and other nutrients to make serotonin. The fact of the matter is that treating ADHD with nutrition is effective and well-researched. Omega-3 fatty acids have been researched thoroughly, and it is safe to say that should supplement ADHD you patients with them (along with having them avoid trans fats). One study appearing in Prostaglandins, Leukotrienes and Essential Fatty Acids (2005; Nov 25 e-pub ahead of print) found that supplementing with flax oil and vitamin C improved levels of RBC membrane fatty acids and a reduction in total hyperactivity scores. Another small pilot study published in Nutrition Journal (2007; 6(1): 16)

found that a high daily dose of EPA/ DHA was found to significantly improve behavior over eight weeks. Other research appearing in the journal, *Lipids* (December 2004;39 (12):1215-1222) also found similar results.

One study found that appeared in the Journal of Child and Adolescent Psychopharmacology (2007; 17(6): 791-802) found that acetyl-Lcarnitine may be of value for children with the "inattentive" type of ADHD. Another small study appearing in Prostaglandins, Leukotreines and Essential Fatty Acids (2002;67(1):33 -38) found that supplementation with L-carnitine helped improve behavior in ADHD patients.

Magnesium and B_6 supplementation helped improve symptoms in a study involving 40 ADHD patients that was published in *Magnesium Research* (2006; 19(1): 46-52). Other research, published in *Magnesium Research* (1997;10(2):143-148) found magnesium deficiency in 95% of the subjects with documented ADHD.

A study published in the *Journal of Learning Disabilities* (May, 1982;15 (5):258-264) looked at B vitamin supplementation and hyperactivity.

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The subjects of the study were 100 children who were either hyperactive or had cerebral dysfunction. They were given 100 mg of thiamin qid, calcium pantothenate (source of B_5) bid, 50 mg of B_6 bid or a placebo for three days. If the subjects responded to the vitamin therapy, they were given the supplements a second time, this time for a week, then alternating between supplementation and placebo. Those who did not respond well to the initial vitamin therapy were given large doses of B complex, niacinamide or elimination diets.

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IMPROVE LEARNING, MEMORY & GRADES

The Appleton Central Alternative High School in Appleton, Wisconsin was established in 1996 for "problem" students who did not fit well into a traditional high school setting. Students were described as "rude, obnoxious, and ill-mannered" by their own dean of students. Problems with discipline were severe enough that a policeman had to be on campus at all times. There were even weapons violations.

In 1997 a new nutrition program was implemented. Machines selling soda pop were eliminated. The program was developed by Paul Stitt (biochemist and owner of Natural Ovens of Manitowoc) and Barbara Reed Stitt, PhD. Dr. Stitt is the author of **Food and Behavior** (she also developed a nutrition program while working as a probation officer that decreased the number of repeat offenders among her charges).

Natural Ovens donated over \$100,000 to hire cooks and set up food service. Nutritious meals were served to the students for breakfast and lunch (the students were only in school for those two meals). Soda pop, candy, chips and chemically laden foods were prohibited. Go to WholeHealthWeb.com to see a video about this project.

Since improving the food fed to the students, for the last three years there have been no dropouts, no expulsions, no drug or weapons problems, and no

suicides. Students say they have more focus and physical stamina.

It is clear that nutrition is the best way to help children with ADD or ADHD. Combine dietary change and supplementation with quality products. Consider a multiple vitamin, they well-tolerated by children in liquid form. To that, add B12 with in combination with folic acid (folic acidis not stable in a liquid multiple vitamin), and a good quality omega-3 product. The combination will contain B vitamins to support the nervous system, omega-3 fatty acids and other nutrients.

Drugging them may not be the best approach. According to researchers from the FDA, drugs given for ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder) can cause properly hallucinations. even when prescribed and taken. The research, published in Pediatrics (Vol. 123 No. 2 February 2009, pp. 611-616) looked at data from 49 different clinical studies and found that the drugs can cause the symptoms of psychosis and maniaincluding hallucinations. The number of children experiencing side effects was small-11 out of 743 participants in the various studies (about 1.5%), but the effects can be severe or disturbing. In some cases the children experienced hallucinations where bugs, worms or snakes were crawling on them. Participants receiving placebos in the various studies experienced no such symptoms.

It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men.

Frederick Douglass



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A SURPRISING WAY TO HELP YOUR CHILD'S Immune system

double-blind, placebo-controlled study А appearing in the journal Pediatrics (2009; 124 (2): looked effect e172-9) at the supplementation in a group of children between the ages of three and five had on the immune system. The 110 subjects were given either a placebo, Lactobacillus acidophilus NCFM (a single probiotic), or a combination of probiotics. Taking the probiotics provided the test group with a 53% lower incidence of fever (for the single strain) and 73% reduction for the group taking the combination probiotic. Probiotics also reduced other cold and flu symptoms including coughing and runny nose. The group taking the supplement also missed

fewer days from day care, 32% fewer days missed for those taking the single strain and 28% fewer days missed for the combination product. Antibiotic use was also less; 68% less in the single strain group and 84% less in the combination group, when compared to controls. These are significant reductions and the authors concluded that daily probiotic supplementation for 6 months (fall/winter) was an effective way to reduce fever and other cold symptoms, and could lower antibiotic use and reduce the number of school days missed.