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## Feeling Good About Fish Oil

Essential Fatty Acids for Concentration and Brain Health

Many parents concerned about the side effects of conventional medications are turning to fish oil first, to treat not just mood disorders but also a variety of learning and developmental problems, including autism, dyslexia and, most notably, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, or A.D.H.D.

Fish oil contains long-chain polyunsaturated fatty acids; most important are the omega-3 fatty acid docosahexaenoic acid, or DHA, believed to play a central role in the development of the infant brain and nervous system, and eicosapentaenoic acid, or EPA. Studies have consistently found that children with A.D.H.D. have low blood levels of DHA, which is in short supply in the Western diet. A small number of recent clinical trials have reported improvements in children's learning and behavioral problems after fish oil therapy.

Some health care practitioners say fish oil therapy can improve children's attention and focus, and studies of

adults have found it may alleviate depression. Many doctors who prescribe it use it as just one component of a comprehensive treatment program, and many prescribe fish oil in addition to medication, not instead of it.

Fish oil along with nutritional supplements, vitamins and various educational and behavioral interventions, can help children function well without medication. But, these are generally not the kids who have severe behavioral difficulties or incredible hyperactivity.

STUDIES on fish oil therapy have had mixed results. A clinical trial in Australia, published last year in *The Journal of Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics*, found improvements in parents' ratings of their children's hyperactivity and inattention, but no difference in teachers' assessments. Meanwhile, the Oxford-Durham study in Britain, published in the journal *Pediatrics* in 2005, reported remarkable

improvements in reading and spelling among children treated with omega-3 fatty acids.

"The therapy improved their inattention, in particular, and seemed to allow them to concentrate and stay on task better," said Paul Montgomery, an author of the Oxford-Durham study.

However, in an earlier 2001 clinical trial carried out at the Mayo Clinic, involving children formally diagnosed with A.D.H.D., saw no decrease in symptoms after four months of therapy.

Most health care providers suggest 1,000 milligrams of combined DHA and EPA daily for a child, and up to 2,000 milligrams for an adult, but they say they adjust the amounts depending on weight. Some experts recommend higher doses to get the full therapeutic effect.

People on Aspirin or Warfarin should consult their physician as fish oil is a blood thinner.

## ADHD Is Associated With a 'Western' Dietary Pattern in Adolescents

Amber L. Howard et al. Journal of Attention Disorders, July 14, 2010;

An Australian team has found an association between "Western style" dietary pattern and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). Wendy H. Oddy, from Telethon Institute for Child Health Research (Perth, Australia), and colleagues assessed data collected on 2,868 live birth children enrolled in The Raine Study. At the study's 14-year follow-up mark, the researchers collected data on the now-adolescent study subjects, and conducted diagnostic assessment for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). The team found that those teens who consumed a "Western style" diet, characterized by take-out and processed foods, were at more than a two-fold increased risk of developing ADHD, as compared to those teens who consumed a "healthy diet" featuring fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and fish. Food sensitivity testing is a great tool to uncover those foods that may be causing behavioural issues. Blood tests can check 95 different food and the body's immune reactions

### Music training for the Development of Listening skills

Recent research on the effects of music training on the nervous system suggest that the neural connections made during musical training also prime the brain for other aspects of human communication, such as skills of language, speech, memory, attention and even vocal emotion

Northwestern University (Illinois, USA), reports that musicians trained to hear sounds embedded in a rich network of melodies and harmonies are primed to understand speech in a noisy background, and exhibit both enhanced cognitive and sensory abilities that give them a distinct advantage for processing speech in challenging listening environments. Writing that: "This effect of music training suggests that, akin to physical exercise and its impact on body fitness, music is a resource that tones the brain for auditory fitness," the researchers urge that: "the role of music in shaping individual development deserves consideration"

Nature Reviews Neuroscience 11, 599-605 (August 2010)



### Pharmacy Update

The BC government has granted ND's who have passed accreditation exams the authority to write prescriptions for most general practice medications.

Both Dr. Entner and Dr. Spooner have had prescriptive authority when practicing in the US and will be able to do so in BC starting in September.

### Why do ND's Need Prescriptive Rights?

As patients seek more holistic care, ND's have taken on a more significant role in the health care system. Prescriptive authority allows us to provide a broader range of care. Another reason is that traditional substances such as high dose vitamins, amino acids, hormones, and botanicals have gradually become 'scheduled drugs' which are available only by prescription. If you have any questions please give us a call

## Herbal 'Brain Tonic'

Bacopa monniera, is used as a brain tonic to enhance memory development, learning, concentration, and to provide relief to patients with anxiety. Recent research has focused primarily on Bacopa's cognitive-enhancing effects, specifically memory, learning, and concentration, and results support the traditional Ayurvedic claims. Research on anxiety, epilepsy, bronchitis and asthma, irritable bowel syndrome

## Did you Know...

A large movie popcorn has 1500 calories, 100 grams of saturated fat, and is worth 39 Weight Watcher points

