

Integrating Physical Health with ADHD



Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is a neurodevelopmental disorder. It is usually diagnosed in childhood; however, some people don't get an evaluation until adulthood. People with ADHD may have difficulty paying attention, controlling impulsive behaviors, and regulating their activity level, which in some cases manifests as restlessness or hyperactivity.

Causes

The exact cause of ADHD is unknown. However, studies suggest that it may be related to genetic, neurological, and environmental factors.

How is ADHD diagnosed?

There is no single test to diagnose ADHD. The evaluation may include a physical exam, vision and hearing tests, and other tests to rule out conditions with ADHD-like symptoms, such as anxiety, depression, sleep problems, or learning disabilities. Evaluation and diagnosis should be performed by a health care professional.



Treatments

Although there is no cure for ADHD, treatments can help reduce symptoms and improve daily functioning. Commonly, ADHD is treated with:

- Medications
- Psychotherapy (talk therapy), including behavioral therapy.
- Lead a healthy lifestyle, such as exercising and maintaining a balanced diet.

Benefits of physical activity

For kids with ADHD, physical activity can be a big help in managing symptoms. Studies show that about 30 minutes of daily exercise can help improve concentration and help you feel better.

It is important to encourage participation in activities that are enjoyable, without forcing, so that exercise is perceived as something positive and not as an obligation. Allowing kids to choose the type of physical activity they prefer increases their motivation and engagement, making it easier for them to stick with the habit of exercising over time. Among the benefits of exercise are:

- It improves self-control (ability to regulate behavior and emotions).
- It increases sociability, which can facilitate relationships with others.
- It reduces stress, which can decrease ADHD symptoms.
- It strengthens self-esteem, improving perceptions and thoughts.



Benefits of healthy eating

Although there is no specific diet for ADHD, some research suggests that certain habits and eating plans may help reduce symptoms.

- Foods to avoid:
 - High in saturated fat
 - High in added sugars
 - With artificial colors
 - Soft drinks
 - Caffeinated beverages
 - Seafood products high in mercury
- Recommended foods
 - Fruits
 - Vegetables
 - Walnuts
 - Eggs
 - Foods with iron, zinc, magnesium, vitamin B6 and Vitamin D.

An important aspect is to maintain regular times for meals and snacks, as routine is important and can benefit people with ADHD.

Support from family, school, and health professionals is key in managing ADHD. Understanding, communication and adequate accompaniment contribute to improving daily performance and quality of life.



Regardless of whether a diet or supplement may seem effective in reducing ADHD symptoms, it is important to note that they should not replace prescribed medical treatment.

Social and Emotional Aspect

For tips, tools, and resources on how you and your family can cope with the emotional and physical concerns that arise during and after medical treatment, please visit your primary care physician or call the following phone lines:

Medical Advice Line

1-844-347-7801

TTY/TDD 1-844-347-7804

APS Health 787-641-9133

References

<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC11941119/>

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