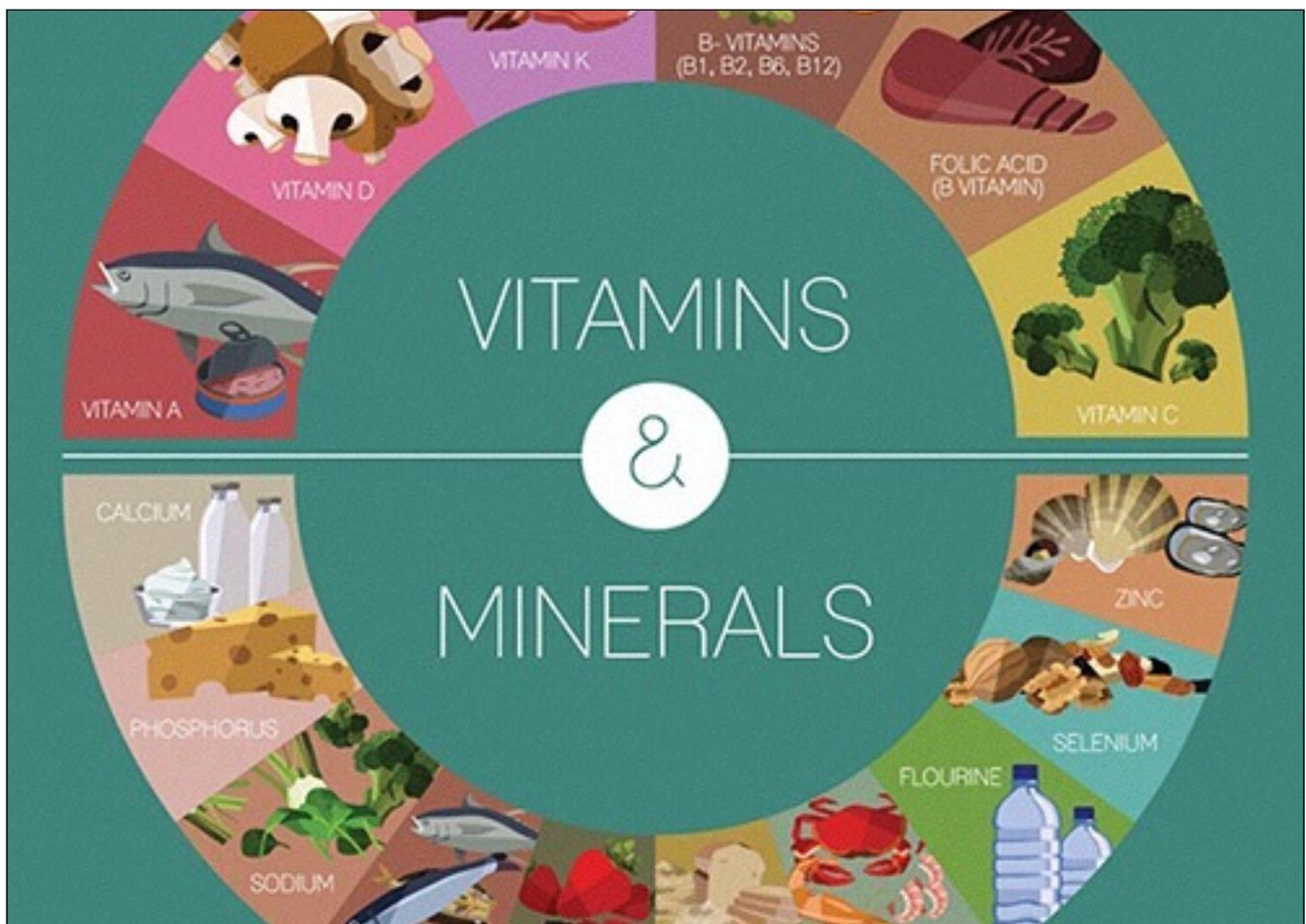

6 Essential Vitamins and Minerals for Managing ADD

From the Editors of **ADDITUDE**
THE ONLY ADDITION SOURCE

July 2014



When To Go Beyond Food

Most ADHD professionals recommend eating a diet full of fruits and vegetables, complex carbs, and some lean protein with every meal to help manage symptoms. However, not everyone eats the right foods to achieve beneficial levels of certain nutrients. In other cases, our bodies don't produce some nutrients we need, so we have to get them from supplements. Find out which vitamins, herbs, and supplements may treat ADHD symptoms. "All natural" is not synonymous with "safe." Many herbs and supplements have side effects, may cause or worsen health problems, or interfere with prescription medications.

Talk with your doctor before taking any supplements. When your doctor asks if you are taking any medications, be sure to tell him about all vitamins and supplements you take on a daily basis.



Omega-3's For Brain Function

If you are looking for a single supplement to add to your diet, it is omega-3 fatty acids. Besides being good for heart health, recent studies have shown that omega-3 fatty acids improve symptoms of ADHD. A comprehensive look at many studies showed that omega-3's are about 40 percent as effective as stimulants in relieving symptoms.

According to Dr. Sandy Newmark, author of *ADHD Without Drugs*, kids between four and eight years old should take between 1,000-1,500 mg. a day. Older kids should get 2,000-2,500 mg. daily.

Look for a product that has twice the amount of EPA to DHA—the two main types of omega-3s. Liquid or capsule forms of omega-3s are best. Other versions have lower amounts of EPA and DHA.

Although none of the following products caused the dreaded fish burp — a deal-breaker for adults and kids alike — some of them needed to be hidden in other foods to get past tasters' picky palates. Here are the results, along with some frank comments from the article's panel:

Melaleuca Omega-3 Creme Delight (Peach Mango Tango or Lime Sorbet flavors)

Benefits: Made from deep cold water wild fish; no fishy taste at all; manufactured in the United States; gluten and dairy free.

Serving: Adults 1 tablespoon; children ages 4-17 1 teaspoon.

Comments: Adults and children alike enjoy it straight.

Carlson for Kids (lemon flavor)

Benefits: Made from cold-water fish caught in Norwegian waters; bottled in Norway to ensure maximum freshness

Serving: 800 mg of omega-3s/ 1/2-teaspoon serving

Comments: Testers preferred it mixed with a favorite food. Try it in a spoonful of lemon yogurt or chocolate milk.

Coromega Kids Omega3 Squeeze (orange flavor)

Benefits: Portable, single-dose packets; clinically proven to deliver 300 percent better absorption than softgels

Serving: 284 mg of omega-3s/2.5-g packet

Comments: Tasters weren't thrilled with taking it straight. Mixing it in a smoothie or yogurt helped a lot.

Barlean's Kid's Omega Swirl (lemonade flavor)

Benefits: Nine times more absorbable than regular fish oil; has the taste and texture of a smoothie

Serving: 720 mg of omega-3s/2-teaspoon serving

Comments: All three kids liked it straight.

SaviSeed (cocoa-kissed flavor)

Benefits: Super-seeds from the rainforests of Peru; richest source of omega-3s, 13 times as much per serving as wild salmon

Serving: 7 g of omega-3s/ 1-ounce serving

Comments: All three testers liked the taste at first, but were less pleased when the chocolate coating gave way to the earthy taste of the seed inside. Try with chocolate milk.

Nordic Naturals Omega-3 Effervescent (creamy orange flavor)

Benefits: Fun to drink as the powder creates fizzy bubbles when dissolved in water; convenient single-serving packets; added vitamin D3

Serving: 670 mg of omega-3s/9.7-g packet

Comments: One of the three testers went for this one. Instead of water, try mixing it in lemonade or orange juice.

Zinc for Impulsivity

Some studies have shown that children with ADHD may have lower levels of zinc. Taking zinc supplements may reduce hyperactivity and impulsivity but not inattentiveness. High levels of zinc, however, may be dangerous.

Have your doctor check zinc levels before taking a supplement. If you do add a zinc supplement, Dr. Newmark suggests that children with ADHD take 20 mg. daily.

Iron For Better Behavior

Some experts believe that iron deficiencies may contribute to ADHD symptoms in children. A 2008 study showed that children who were not anemic but had low ferritin levels, a protein needed to store iron in the blood, showed improvement of symptoms after 12 weeks of iron supplements.

Before taking an iron supplement, speak with your doctor about checking iron levels: High iron levels can be dangerous.

Magnesium For Relaxation and Sleep

Healthy levels of magnesium in the blood can help relax children with ADHD. Some small studies have shown that adding magnesium supplements decreases some symptoms of ADHD. Magnesium helps with sleep and relaxation – big challenges for children and adults with ADHD.

Vitamin C For Dopamine

Vitamin C, says Dr. Ned Hallowell, is important in modulating the neurotransmitter dopamine at the synapses in the brain. (ADHD stimulants are effective because they increase dopamine levels in the brain.) Hallowell recommends getting vitamin C from food, but if your child doesn't eat a healthy diet, try a daily supplement.

One caution: Don't take vitamin C less than an hour before or after taking ADHD meds. It prevents the med from being absorbed.

Protein For Focus

If your child doesn't eat high-protein foods, which are key to increasing attentiveness and focus, or is a picky eater, give him a protein-powder drink in their place. You can mix it with his favorite juice or milk to help the protein go down easier. Look for brands that are low in sugar and free of artificial flavors and preservatives.

Multivitamins

A daily multivitamin, containing the recommended daily allowance of vitamins and minerals, is important for optimal brain health. Many of the multivitamin/multimineral products on the market contain sugar, preservatives, and artificial colors, which may increase hyperactivity in children. Look for brands that are low in sugar with no artificial colors or flavors.

Help For Sleep

There is limited evidence that supports using herbs in treating ADHD. The herb valerian can calm hyperactivity and may reduce anxiety, but it doesn't improve concentration.

Valerian also helps with sleep problems and lessens the "rebound effect" that some kids experience when stimulants wear off. Talk with your doctor or a nutritionist who specializes in herbs about valerian.

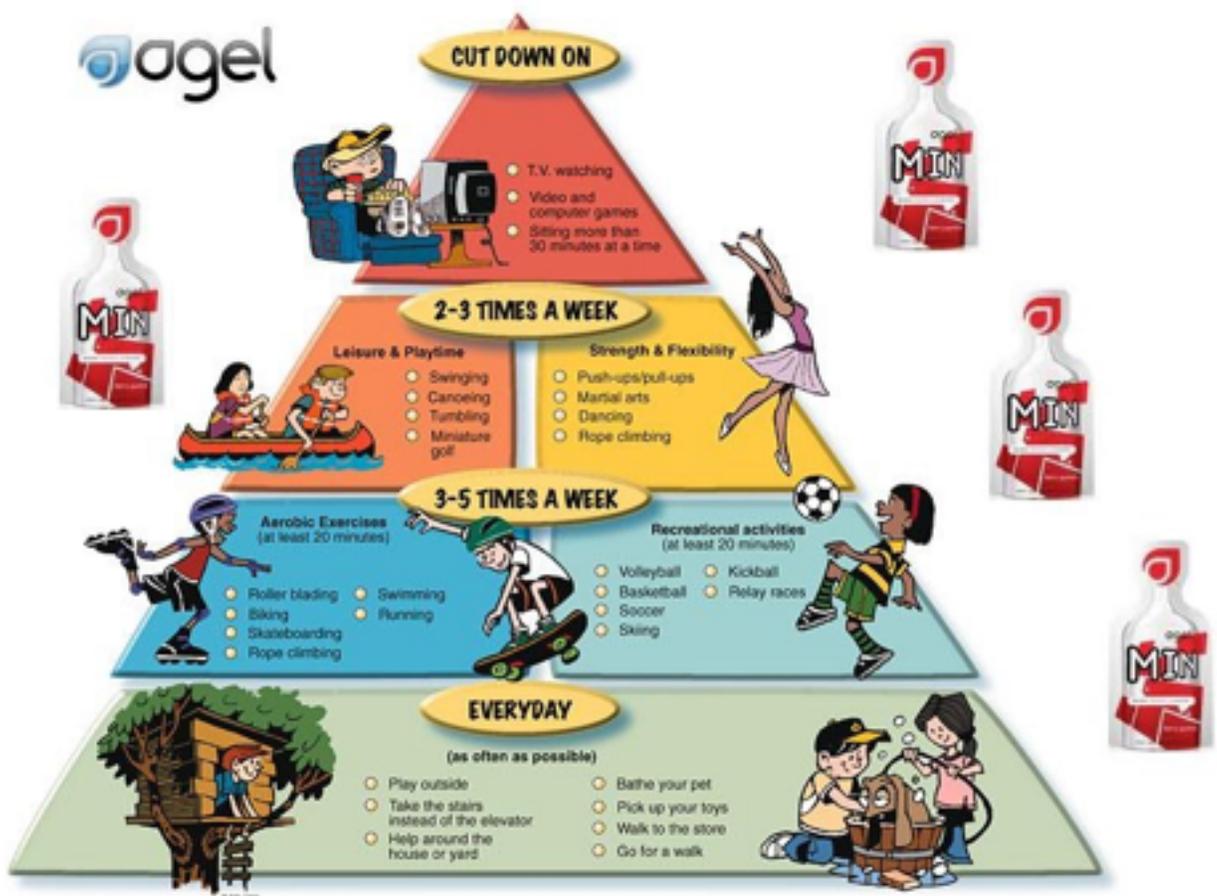
Melatonin is a natural hormone produced in our bodies to help us get to sleep. When we turn off the television, dim the lights, and settle down for bed, our body produces melatonin and we become sleepy. But for those with ADHD, sleep is sometimes difficult to come by. Melatonin supplements can help and are safe to take. Always start with the smallest possible dose.

Trying Ginko & Ginseng

Some small studies show that Ginkgo Biloba helps improve memory and, when taken with ginseng, can decrease impulsiveness and distractibility. Other studies have shown no or minimal improvement.

Talk with your doctor or a nutritionist before trying them. These herbs can cause health problems, especially if you have a history of diabetes, seizures, or schizophrenia.

Listen to Your Body



The Only Vitamins and Minerals you Need!

agel

For many supplements, there isn't a lot of research to determine a recommended daily dose. Pay attention to your body and adjust the dosage if you notice something is wrong. For example, you may be taking zinc supplements and find yourself getting stomachaches. Discontinue or cut back on the supplement to see if the stomachaches disappear.