

ADD AND ADHD

Staying Healthy with Dr. Aieta, N.D.



trient deficiencies and make proper dietary changes that can better address the underlying cause.

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Over the past several years, I have seen more and more patients (children and adults) with a diagnosis of Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).

The standard medical treatments for these conditions are stimulant drugs, such as Ritalin and Adderall. These drugs carry significant side effects and don't address the underlying cause of the condition. The reality is that symptoms of ADD and ADHD aren't caused by a deficiency of patented stimulant medications. But they can be caused by other nutritional deficiencies and dietary shortcomings.

In fact, I think that diet is the most important tool for reversing – and *even eliminating* – ADD and ADHD.

The diet changes are ones that I've written about numerous times in this column over the years. People with ADD and ADHD should eat only whole, unrefined, unprocessed foods, with no added sugar or chemical sweeteners. I have

these patients avoid any chemicals in food such as MSG, chemical food coloring, flavoring and preservatives. These chemicals can deplete vital nutrients in the body and are toxic to the nervous system.

Another big thing with diet is to ensure that blood sugar levels remain stable by eating adequate protein at each meal, and not skipping meals or going too long without eating. When blood sugar drops, it can lead to a hypoglycemic reaction and poor concentration and irritability. Both are symptoms of ADD and ADHD.

I also rule out food allergies as a contributing factor in these conditions, with wheat and dairy being on top of the list. Food allergies can have negative effects on behavior and mood.

In terms of supplementation, there are numerous nutrient deficiencies that are also major contributors. Blood work and testing can uncover these deficiencies, which can be easily corrected with proper supplementation. One big deficiency I find is omega-3 fatty acids, such as those

found in fish oil, nuts and seeds, and organic meats and eggs. There are numerous research studies out there backing the use of omega-3 fatty acids to treat ADD and ADHD. One research paper published in 2006 noted "Lower levels of omega-3 fatty acids, in blood have repeatedly been associated with a variety of behavioral disorders including ADHD."

Another nutrient commonly deficient in these patients is iron. Iron deficiency can be a major contributor to behavior problems and poor concentration. I will usually run a blood test for ferritin levels, which represents a patient's reserve level of iron. I will usually supplement with a highly absorbable form of iron, called iron glycinate, in conjunction with adequate vitamin C to help with absorption.

If you or your child has issues with hyperactivity or the ability to concentrate, before you decide to medicate, you may want to consult with a naturopathic physician. A good naturopathic physician can thoroughly evaluate and treat you for nu-

MISSION: LEAN BODY

Women's Fitness with Lisa Thomas



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Fitness magazines feature fabulous fitness models that look strikingly different from everyday folks. That's because they have the advantage of a low body-fat percentage, enhanced muscle mass and muscle density. You can get these results too, but it doesn't happen overnight. This look must be built over time.

You cannot expect results within a month or two; you have to be consistent and do the work necessary. You have to build the foundation to sculpt your masterpiece. It takes intense weight training, proper form, lifting heavy, cardio, and proper nutrition.

Let me explain what I mean by intense weight training, proper form, and heavy weight.

Intense weight training is a big factor in your muscle gain. Do you do your two sets of 12 to 15 repetitions and call it a day? If so, you need to push for the lower reps (six to 10, with 12 being the max) until you can't perform another one. The general recommendations for "hypertrophy training" are to do eight to 12 reps per set, doing multiple sets per exercise, and multiple exercises per body part.

If you train longer than 45 minutes, beware of glycogen storage. Your body

can only work so long before depleting its energy source. (With intense training estimated at 45 minutes.) If you feel light-headed or nauseated, you need to stop.

To build muscle, you must progressively overload your muscles; you can do this by increasing your weights, varying sets and reps, and even changing exercises. You can achieve your highest results by focusing on the intensity of your training.

As for proper form, you should select a weight range that allows you to properly perform eight to 10 reps (10-12 for endurance athletes). Make sure your last few repetitions are difficult to perform. You want constant tension on the muscle during the upward and lowering phase – no swinging or momentum. Taking your time on the movement, focus on the muscle in use. The point here is to pump up the muscles until they can't move an inch more.

Use free weights for all heavy sets. Your chest might feel really pumped when using the Smith machine or chest press machine, but when you want to add real mass, use dumbbells or free weight bars instead. Free weights will make your ancillary muscles work as well, and they will build compound mass. When using free weights, a greater range of motion simply increases

the number of muscles used in the training. Hence, better results.

These are just three factors in building that fitness competitor or model look. It is difficult to get into the nutritional aspect because that must be customized to each individual. I can tell you as a fitness competitor and model, you don't eat pizza, chips, cookies, or donuts.

Give your body the time; it needs to grow.

Rome was not built in a day.

Lisa Thomas is a personal trainer/fitness coach in the Greater Springfield area, as well as owner of Thomas Fitness Center and

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