

Diet and ADHD

Some families may be concerned about possible links between additives and ADHD.

- The current NICE guidance: information for parents of children with ADHD (last updated 2013) says that
'There is no evidence that dietary supplements such as fatty acids (omega 3 or omega 6) or cutting out foods containing artificial colouring and other additives can help children with ADHD.'
- The NICE guideline information for health professionals:
Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder: Diagnosis and management of ADHD in children, young people and adults, says:

"Healthcare professionals should stress the value of a balanced diet, good nutrition and regular exercise for children, young people and adults with ADHD. The elimination of artificial colouring and additives from the diet is not recommended as a generally applicable treatment for children and young people with ADHD.

Clinical assessment of ADHD in children and young people should include asking about foods or drinks that appear to influence their hyperactive behaviour. If there is a clear link, healthcare professionals should advise parents or carers to keep a diary of food and drinks taken and ADHD behaviour. If the diary supports a relationship between specific foods and drinks and behaviour, then referral to a dietitian should be offered. Further management (for example, specific dietary elimination) should be jointly undertaken by the dietitian, mental health specialist or paediatrician, and the parent or carer and child or young person."

(NICE clinical guideline 72 Issued: September 2008 last modified: March 2013 guidance.nice.org.uk/cg72)

- If you prefer not to buy foods containing certain colours there is a regularly updated list of food ranges which do not use sunset yellow FCF (E110), quinoline yellow (E104), carmoisine (E122), allura red (E129), tartrazine (E102), ponceau 4R (E124

The list is produced by the Food Standards Agency and you can view it at <http://www.food.gov.uk/policy-advice/additivesbranch/foodcolours/colourfree/manufacturers>

