

# Does diet affect the symptoms of ADHD?

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Abstract

## INTRODUCTION:

Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is the most common psychiatric diagnosis in childhood and adolescence, with an estimated worldwide-pooled prevalence of 5,29%. The type of treatment depends on several factors. Psychopharmacological treatment entails undesirable side effects, with unclear long-term benefits, which has led the scientific community to investigate other therapeutic approaches, such as dietary interventions.

## METHODS:

The authors conducted a classical review on the current treatment recommended in individuals with ADHD diagnosis, their dietary patterns, as well as dietary factors possibly implicated in the etiology and treatment of this disorder. An extensive bibliographic research was carried out in the databases PubMed, The Cochrane Library and the National Guideline Clearinghouse.

## DISCUSSION:

The most common dietary interventions in the case of ADHD are food supplementation diets (e.g. PUFAs, vitamins) and elimination diets. Supplementation with omega-3 PUFAs lacks further studies that can validate them as an effective therapeutic approach in this disorder. Also, regarding vitamin supplementation, studies are not consistent as to their role in the etiology of ADHD. Elimination diets are unclear as to the benefits provided in individuals with ADHD. Children with ADHD are less likely to engage in healthy lifestyle behaviors than non-ADHD youth.

## CONCLUSION:

There is no clear evidence that supports dietary interventions for the treatment of ADHD. The effects of unhealthy diet patterns in ADHD individuals are not yet fully understood and, like the general population, children with ADHD may benefit from a healthy lifestyle.