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Food Additives and Child Health. Trasande L, Shaffer RM, Sathyanarayana S, Pediatrics, August 2018

"Artificial food colors, common in children's food products, may be associated with worsened attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) symptoms. Studies cited in the report found a significant number of children who cut out synthetic food colorings from their diets showed decreased ADHD symptoms."


“There is good emerging evidence that aspects of diet can indeed affect ADHD. It is likely that multiple factors may be at play in regards to environmental exposures and ADHD, and dietary exposure effects may be multifactorial as well. Recommendations that combine what is known about diet and ADHD deserve renewed consideration.”


“This study provides sufficient scientific evidence that a causal link truly exists between tartrazine and inflection of hyperactivity, anxiety and depression-like behaviours in rats and points to the hazardous impact of tartrazine on public health.”

Cytogenetic evaluation and DNA interaction studies of the food colorants amaranth, erythrosine and tartrazine. Mpountoukas P, et al. Food and Chemistry Toxicology, 2010

“Our results indicate that these food colorants had a toxic potential to human lymphocytes in vitro and it seems that they bind directly to the DNA.”

From the website of the American Academy of Family Physicians: “Studies have shown that certain food colorings and preservatives may cause or worsen hyperactive behavior in some children.”

British Medical Journal May 2008: In an editorial, Andrew Kemp, M.D., professor of pediatrics at the University of Sydney writes, “In view of the relatively harmless intervention of eliminating colorings and preservatives, and the large number of children taking drugs for hyperactivity, it might be proposed that an appropriately supervised and evaluated trial of eliminating colorings and preservatives should be part of standard treatment for children.”


“…a trial of a preservative-free, food coloring-free diet is a reasonable intervention.”

“Thus, the overall findings of the [McCann] study are clear and require that even we skeptics, who have long doubted parental claims of the effects of various foods on the behavior of their children, admit we might have been wrong.”

“Artificial colours or a sodium benzoate preservative (or both) in the diet result in increased hyperactivity in 3-year-old and 8/9-year-old children in the general population.”


Testing the amount of additives often found in snack foods, Lau combined Blue 1 and MSG, and Yellow 10 and aspartame. The combinations were synergistic, far more toxic than expected by adding up the effect of each one tested alone. Blue 1 + MSG was 4 times as toxic and Yellow 10 + aspartame was 7 times as toxic.


“…this study is consistent with accumulating evidence that neurobehavioral toxicity may characterize a variety of widely distributed chemicals.”

**The Effects of a Double-Blind Placebo Controlled Artificial Food Colourings and Benzoate Preservatives Challenge on Hyperactivity in a General Population Sample of Pre-school Children.** B. Bateman, et. al., *Archives of Disease in Childhood* June 2004

“There is a general adverse effect of artificial food colouring and benzoate preservatives on the behaviour of 3-year-old children which is detectable by parents but not by a simple clinic assessment.”


“The effect of diet and nutrition on ADHD is an issue that merits greater recognition by practitioners in this field.” “In general, diet modification plays a major role in the management of ADHD and should be considered as part of the treatment protocol.”

**Favorable effect of a standard elimination diet on the behavior of young children with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD): a pilot study.** L. Pelsser et al., *Ned Tijdschr Geneeskd*, December 2002

25 of 40 children (62%) who met the DSM-IV criteria for ADHD showed an improvement in behavior of at least 50% after two weeks on a standard elimination diet, according to parent ratings using the 10-item Conners list, the ADHD Rating Scale, and a physical complaint list. Among the children with both parent and teacher ratings, 10 of 15 (68%) improved both at home and at school. “In young children with ADHD, an elimination diet can lead to a statistically significant decrease in symptoms.”

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