

## **When two and two don't ADD**

Has your child been diagnosed with ADD or ADHD? It's such a common diagnosis today and while the usual method of control is a trip to the doctor and a prescription, there are natural approaches which might also benefit your child.

Food additives can be a real problem. In 2002, there were about 5,000 chemical additives which were approved for human consumption in the USA, and regulations in Australia are similar. While many of these additives don't cause obvious health problems, there is virtually no research on the effects of combining them in the human body. If your child eats lots of processed foods, then they could be consuming 10-15g or more of preservatives, colours, artificial sweeteners, taste enhancers, emulsifiers and other chemicals daily.

Sugar is another culprit. There is a researched relationship between sugar consumption and artificial food dyes, which increases with the amount of sugar consumed. This manifests in more aggressive and restless behaviour.

Food sensitivities and allergies are on the increase. There are many theories for this, and it's a big problem. The rise of fast food, coupled with the introduction of poorly tested GM ingredients may be fuelling these problems, but little research is concentrated in these areas. It is worth having some tests done to see if this could be a cause of your child's problems.

One researcher has found that a simple diet based on lamb, chicken, rice, potatoes, banana, apple, cabbage and cauliflower, plus some vitamin supplementation improved behaviour in 63% of children tested, however there hasn't been enough research in this area to make this a definitive answer.

Children are notoriously finicky eaters, and are swayed by marketing and peer pressure. It is very hard to control your child's diet in good circumstances, let alone when they have behavioural problems. However, reducing processed foods and promoting wholefoods such as wholegrains, fruits and vegetables will certainly help their health and their behaviour, even if it's on a more subtle level than you'd like. Leading by example is a start.

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[Advice in these columns is of a general nature only and is not to be taken as specific treatment.]