

ALTERNATIVE ADHD TREATMENTS*

A common question asked by parents is, “Do alternative treatments for ADHD really work?” It is important to note that before any treatment is considered for ADHD, it is recommended that you contact your child’s doctor to discuss next steps. Although alternative treatments appear in magazines, on the television and in advertisements there has been no scientific finding that these alternatives are effective in managing ADHD symptoms.

What are some of these alternative ADHD treatments?

Some of the more known unproven treatments include special diets, herbal supplements, homeopathic treatments, vision therapy, chiropractic adjustments, anti-motion-sickness medication, metronome training, auditory stimulation, applied kinesiology and brain wave biofeedback. If you plan on trying an alternative ADHD treatment it is important to inform your child’s doctor as they may interact with any prescribed medication and hinder your child’s progress.

What treatments can be useful?

ADHD management often involves a team approach. Research supports a combination of medication and behavioral therapy as the most effective treatment option for children and adolescents with ADHD. Behavioral therapy is often part of an ADHD management plan as it can help increase positive behaviors and decrease the frequency of negative behaviors, thoughts and feelings that can occur with ADHD. As a parent, family member or caregiver of someone with ADHD, you can take part in the behavior therapy to learn more about behaviors caused by ADHD, goals of behavior therapy and behavior therapy techniques. Behavioral techniques, including giving rewards for appropriate behaviors and consequences for unwanted behaviors, can be effective both in the home and school setting. These techniques aid in setting boundaries for children and helping them deal with choices in different settings.

Medications are used to help improve symptoms of inattention, hyperactivity and impulsivity. Although medication is not a cure, it is thought to help areas of the brain that control attention and behavior to work more normally. Paired with behavioral therapy, it has been shown that children’s medication dosage may be lowered if behavioral therapy is working well.

Conclusion

While some ADHD symptoms diminish over time, ADHD can be a lifelong condition for some people, as there is no known cure for ADHD at this time. Early diagnosis and treatment can help individuals learn to manage their symptoms.

*Adapted from the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and American Psychiatric Association, “ADHD, Parents Medication Guide” and www.adhdandyou.com.