

5 QUESTIONS

*about diagnosing
a child with ADHD*



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- **Position:** Licensed social worker and private-practice therapist
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- **Years in field:** In private practice since 1990, working with adolescents and adults with ADHD since 1991.

Q: What is ADHD?

A: ADHD, or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, is a neurological disorder which manifests itself in behavioral symptoms that may make it difficult for the child to perform successfully in school and other activities. These symptoms include inattention and/or impulsivity and hyperactivity. ADHD is divided into three subtypes: inattentive type, impulsive type and “combined” type, which combines characteristics of both inattentive and impulsive types.

Q: What are some signs of ADHD in children?

A: The most common symptoms in children vary by subtype, but typically involve inattentive symptoms such as distractibility; difficulty staying on task and completing tasks, schoolwork or chores; frequently losing things (such as schoolwork, books and personal items); and difficulty with organizing tasks and personal items. Children may also appear fidgety and have difficulty sitting still, seem to have endless energy and may talk excessively or blurt out answers before the question is completed. They have difficulty waiting their turn in activities and often butt into or intrude on others’ conversations and activities.

Q: How can a parent differentiate between normal “acting out” and ADHD?

A: Beginning at about 2 years old, children will begin to act out in an attempt to assert their independence. To one degree or another, this “acting out” will continue throughout adolescence into the early 20s. Children with ADHD, on the other hand, have difficulty with maintaining self control and thinking ahead, leading to poor or impulsive decision-making. Children with ADHD can tend to be more argumentative and oppositional with parents and authority figures than their peers who do not have ADHD.

Q: Who should a parent contact if they suspect a problem?

A: If a parent suspects that their child has an attentional deficit, they should contact the child’s pediatrician. Many pediatricians are skilled at assessing and diagnosing the disorder. Parents may also request a referral from their physician to a licensed psychologist, clinical social worker or professional counselor who has training and expertise in assessing and diagnosing ADHD.

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What goes in your cart?



Developing a healthy attitude in kids can lead to better choices

BY ANNE BURKLEY • For The Patriot-News

Years ago, kids asked for packaged food to get toys out of the box or proofs-of-purchase to send away for prizes. Today, kids beg for cereal, fruit snacks, soup, macaroni and cheese and other foods that are in packages that feature their favorite TV shows and movies. If a cartoon character on a food package is a deciding factor when it comes to what goes in your grocery cart, you have plenty of company. According to the Federal Trade Commission, U.S. food and beverage companies spend more than \$1.6 billion a year advertising to children, who in turn nag their parents to buy the products they want.

Although marketing campaigns have influenced children’s eating habits since the days of the Secret Decoder Ring, the recent rise in childhood obesity has experts, researchers — and sometimes even the companies themselves — looking for ways to encourage healthier choices.

Abigail Ketchum of Susquehanna Twp. said that her 2-year-old son recently made the transition from wanting everything Elmo to wanting everything “Cars.”

“Up until now, the nagging has been manageable,” she said. In fact, since Elmo tended to be associated with healthy foods, Ketchum said it felt nice to be able to give him something that he wanted.

“Since he discovered ‘Cars,’ shopping is starting to be a problem,” she admitted. So far, she’s managed to limit the ‘Cars’-related food purchases to 100 percent juice boxes, but she worries about the day

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HEALTHY PICK OF THE WEEK: PERSIMMONS

Dating to ancient China, this orange-red fruit made its U.S. debut in the 1880s after being introduced in Washington, D.C. Today, California produces hundreds of persimmon varieties.

• **NUTRITION:** A medium-sized persimmon contains 120 calories and is a good source of fiber and vitamins A and K.

• **HOW TO CHOOSE:** Select persimmons that are plump with smooth, unblemished skin, and eat ripe ones

immediately.

• **HOW TO STORE:** Store unripe persimmons at room temperature in a paper bag with an apple or banana to ripen. Or briefly store ripe persimmons in the refrigerator.

• **HOW TO USE:** With persimmons’ sweet flavor, they make a great addition to desserts. Try a persimmon cheesecake or a traditional persimmon pudding.

SOURCE: FruitsandVeggiesMatter.gov



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Don't let kids drive you crazy in the grocery store. Ask them to search for foods on your list to keep their mind off nagging you for unhealthy items that aren't on it.

DIET

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he asks for cereals and snacks that aren't as healthy.

Beth Beam of Mechanicsburg said she was excited when her 4-year-old son, a dinosaur fanatic, requested a box of oatmeal featuring dinosaurs on the box. "We thought it would get him to eat oatmeal," she said. "Wrong!"

A recent study published in the Journal of Children and Media confirms what Ketchum and Beam, and just about every other parent who has ever gone shopping with their kids, knows: Packaging featuring cartoon characters entices young children to pester parents for food based on what's on the box instead of what is in it.

What worries Andrea Abbe, a clinical dietitian at Penn State Hershey Children's Hospital, is the increase in overweight children who are at risk for, or already have, lifestyle-related diseases. In the last 30 years, the incidence of overweight children and adolescents has doubled and tripled, respectively. As a result, children are now suffering diseases such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, sleep apnea, asthma and Type 2 diabetes.

"Diabetes is a particular concern to us because it carries with it a host of other health complications and it leads to the failure of most systems of the body," Abbe said. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that Type 2 diabetes is up 90 percent since 1990.

Building a healthy attitude

Parents cope with nagging in a variety of ways: giving in, yelling, ignoring, distracting, limiting exposure to commercials, shopping without children, setting rules, explaining and offering alternate items.

But there is one thing that Abbe said tends to influence kids the most — family attitude toward health.

"I think that family modeling and behavior and attitudes about healthy eating have more of an influence than we believe," Abbe said. If parents eat healthy and are active, chances are good that their children will follow their lead.

In-store strategies

Parents also need to know the nutritional needs of their children and strive to meet them within an appropriate calorie range. They need to educate themselves on what is healthy and they need to be able to see through the marketing jargon on

How to read a label

WHAT IS LISTED on the side of a box is much more important than what is on the front of the package. Here is what to look at what kids ages 4 to 8 need for healthy growth.

- **Serving size:** The serving size is listed first, followed by the number of servings per container. Be realistic. If a serving size is five crackers, is that what you intend to eat?
- **Calories:** A calorie is the measure of energy provided by the food. Focus on getting the number of nutrients needed for the day within an appropriate calorie range. Kids ages 4 to 8 years need 1,200-1,800 calories per day.
- **Limit these:** The total grams of fat should be between 33 and 47 grams, or about 25 percent to 35 percent of calories. Saturated fat should be less than 10 percent of calories. Cholesterol should be below 300 grams, and sodium, less than 1,200.
- **Get enough of these:** Fiber, look for 17 to 25 grams; vitamin A, 1,333 IU; vitamin D, 600 IU; vitamin C, 25 mg; calcium, 1,000 mg; iron, 10 g; protein, 30-90 g.
- **Ingredients list:** The ingredients are listed in order of weight, from most to the least. The first two or three ingredients are the most important. Be aware of all the names for added sugar: nectar, sweetener, syrup, juice, fruit juice concentrate and words that end in -ose. Also, when looking for cereal and breads, beware of words such as multi-grain, cracked wheat, stone-ground and bran. If it doesn't say whole, it is a refined grain. A good source of whole grain will have at least 3 grams of fiber per serving.
- **Percentage daily value:** This percentage indicates how a serving contributes to the 2,000 calorie diet. Remember, depending on their size, children might only require slightly more than half the amount of calories or nutrients.

SOURCE: www.mayoclinic.com/health/nutrition-for-kids/NU00606

the front of a box, Abbe said.

For example, Kellogg's sells the same fruit-flavored snacks in 16 different character shapes and packages to appeal to children. The package highlights that the snacks are fat free, made with real fruit, provide a full serving of vitamin C and only have 80 calories per pack. However,

Navigating the aisles

ANDREA ABBE, a clinical dietitian at Penn State Hershey Children's Hospital, and other experts in child nutrition offer the following tips:

- **Have a plan,** including a list and what roles the kids will play. Communicate expectations with kids.
- **Enlist older kids** to find food and read labels.
- **Younger kids can engage** in a treasure hunt based on the list. Ask them to look for products based on color, shape or food group.
- **Let children choose** a vegetable and a fruit to buy and have a say in its preparation. According to the American Diabetes Association, giving kids a little ownership over what goes in the cart can be helpful in getting them to eat it once it's on their plate.
- **When you get to the cereal aisle,** allow your child to pick out any cereal they'd like as long as it has less than 10 grams of sugar and has three or more grams of fiber. Allowing kids to choose within boundaries teaches them to make good food choices, Abbe said.

- **Go through the store circular and coupons** before shopping so that you don't have to spend time comparison shopping in the dreaded cereal aisle.

- **Use grocery store sitter services.** Both Giant and Wegmans have locations that offer free, supervised play areas for children over age 3.

Online sources for parents and caregivers

- nutritionandmedia.org
- www.nourishinteractive.com
- www.letsmove.gov
- www.myplate.gov

read the label and you'll find that the first three ingredients are different forms of sugar.

Ketchum said she does stop to read labels, even though it takes more time. If sugar is in the top three ingredients, an impulse buy rarely makes it into her cart. As her son becomes more influenced by marketing, she said that going to the store alone is often the easiest way to shop quickly and healthfully.

Beam, who rarely has the option of shopping solo, has found that asking her kids to help find items on the list keeps begging for treats not on the list to a minimum. When that fails, a small toy keeps her 4-year-old busy in the cart.