



healthcare for the whole family

Attention to ADD/ADHD

Q: My son has been diagnosed with ADHD, and I am nervous about the medication. Is there anything I can do naturally to help him be more focused?

A: Attention deficit (hyperactivity) disorder is a multifaceted condition that is typically diagnosed in childhood and is said to persist into the adult years. The most common medication used to treat ADHD is Ritalin. Some of the side effects include nervousness, insomnia, decreased appetite, dizziness, drowsiness, headache, nausea, abdominal pain, and skin rashes. Less common are dyskinesia, hyperactivity, convulsions, muscle cramps, tics, and psychotic episodes. Prolonged therapy has been associated with growth retardation. If your child is on this medication, it is imperative to monitor these side effects with your doctor. Also, consider applying functional medicine to help alongside, or as an alternative to, Ritalin. Every child is unique in terms of what causes their behaviour, and the treatment that may work for a particular child may differ from one to the next. Studies have shown that hyperactive children can have food sensitivities, and when these problem foods are eliminated, many children's behaviour improves significantly. Don't forget about feeding the brain! There are many nutrients that are important for proper brain function and are depleted in the typical Canadian diet, such as Magnesium, Vitamin B6, and DHA (from Omega 3 fatty acids). Homeopathy and exercise are also beneficial. Trying functional medicine can be so helpful to your child. As we approach another school year, get a jump start on promoting healthy behaviour without unhealthy the side effects!