

Accept - don't reject

Greetings from the Attention Deficit & Hyperactivity Support Group of Southern Africa

ADHASA

Helping the community for 17 years!



This article targets people with ADD/ADHD but the information could help non-ADD people too. Please make this newsletter available to anyone who could use it.

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VOLUNTEERS NEEDED TO ASSIST ONE MORNING A WEEK IN NATIONAL OFFICE. PLEASE PHONE SANDY 011 793 2079 LYNNE 011 888 7655

Keeping up with ADD

Dec 2006—Msy 2007

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Office hours: Weekday mornings 08h00 to 13h00 ADHASA National Office Delta Park School, Blairgowrie

TEACHER SAYS MY CHILD IS ADD!

My son's teacher says my child is ADD but I don't believe her. He's a bright child and we never had any problems before he went to school. He is just a normal, naughty little boy who would rather be running around in the playground than sitting in a classroom.



A traumatic experience Being told that your child is ADD can be a traumatic experience and our first

reaction is usually to deny it because of all the connotations that come with it ... inability to concentrate, learning difficulties, social difficulties, bad behaviour and so on. It's as if you hear doors slamming shut all around you - doors to your child's future learning opportunities! People mistakenly assume that a child with ADD or hyperactivity cannot be bright.

Many parents go through a period of grieving at the loss of their 'perfect child'.

Or a relief

On the other hand there are parents who breathe a huge sigh of relief when they are told that their child may have ADD or ADHD because, finally, they have a direction they can follow. They have been struggling in the dark for so long and now they at least know where to start...

Diagnosis

ADD/ADHD should be diagnosed by: (1) Educational psychologists (educational assessment);

(2) Paediatricians or neurologists (medical assessment) who are most likely to prescribe medications like Ritalin, Concerta, Strattera etc. For many people, medication provides the silver bullet that seems to solve all their problems, but this is not so for everyone.

Healthy eating

There is ever increasing recognition of the vital role played by healthy eating, and ensuring that the body has all the essential fatty acids it needs as well as the vitamins and minerals required to metabolise them. Children (and adults) with AD/HD are said to have lowered nutrient absorption rates....



in other words it has been said that they absorb fewer nutrients from their foods than other people ... so they may be more at risk for developing nutrition-related difficulties.

This approach ties up with the theory that ADD/ADHD may be due to a metabolic disorder and that people with ADD/ADHD are unable to metabolise and use essential fatty acids (especially when the body lacks certain nutrients such as calcium, magnesium, zinc, vitamins B and C). The Support Group, ADHASA, has been built on a foundation of healthy eating and raising levels of EFAs in the body. Over the years we have seen many dramatic improvements in children (and adults) when put onto a healthy eating plan and supplements.

### Medication vs supplementation

Be aware that supplementation and medication are two completely different things:

Medication refers to medicine (or drugs) to target the particular problems in the body. Bear in mind that we all use drugs in our everyday lives – headache tablets, muscle relaxants – sometimes they help with the healing process and sometimes they do no more than give relief from the symptoms.

Supplementation refers to vitamins, minerals (usually in a multivitamin and mineral complex) and essential fatty acids that help build the body ... and in the process difficulties experienced may disappear as the body gets what it needs.

Parents approaching ADHASA are encouraged to look at their children's diet whether they are having medication or not. Either way it can help children function at higher levels. We often find that children respond far better and gain more from whatever therapies they may be having; some difficulties just seem to disappear. However, response to healthier eating and EFA supplementation seems to be

Omega-3 fatty acids are found in oily fish like salmon and flaxseed and canola oils



much slower when children are on medication.

### Other Therapies

In addition to diet, supplementation and/or medication, we may need to know a bit about different therapies available. For example, occupational therapists assist with co-ordination difficulties (possibly indicated by poor handwriting, or clumsiness); some reading problems (eg midline crossing); over reaction to touch or sound; biting others or chewing strange objects; very poor eating habits. As they train the neurological system in one area, there is almost inevitably a spill over into and improvement in other areas of difficulty. The same applies to most therapies.

### Working beyond AD/HD

I have often heard children say "I can't help it if I'm so bad ... I'm hyperactive". Adults say it too. The sad thing is that they are so often told that they are bad that they accept it! And it has a devastating impact of their lives lowering confidence, self esteem and affecting achievement on a permanent basis!

With a bit of effort this can be avoided: telling a child that 'he is a good person but that what he did was a bad thing to do' allows him to recognise that it's the action that's 'bad' and not himself.

In the same way I think it is time that we stopped saying that children *are* ADD/ADHD. It would be kinder and more empowering for them to know that they may be *affected by* (the condition of) ADD/ADHD. It could make all the difference between someone working beyond their challenges or accepting and living according to the label.

### Where to get help

If in need of a friendly ear or information on ADD/ADHD phone or visit the ADHASA office. They really understand! Read up on the subject ... my book *Hyperactivity and ADD – caring and coping* (now in its third edition) can be found at major book stores or can be ordered from ADHASA.

The most important thing is that the child is able to go through his school years and come out the other end with his confidence and self esteem intact: quite a challenge in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Dr Christopher Greene once stated that "A problem only becomes a problem when it causes a problem". Perhaps AD/HD might not have become the issue it is today if our lifestyles were less demanding and more supportive for our children ... and for ourselves.

### Keeping Up with ADD

I wrote the first 'Keeping Up with ADD' in December 2003 and have really enjoyed putting my thoughts onto paper and sharing information with my clients, ADHASA members and ADD contacts country wide. Many people wrote to let us know just how much these articles had helped them.

Keeping Up with ADD turned out to be an important part of ADHASA re-establishing itself. As the group grew, so did my work load and unfortunately I was no longer able to produce them on the regular basis as I originally had done. Obviously this is just not good enough and so I'm delighted to inform you that Zivana Jenkinson will be producing Keeping Up with ADD in future—and will be doing so on a monthly basis.

She has a great style of writing and I know you're going to love receiving your regular Keeping Up with ADD!



### Happy News

In many ways it seems like just yesterday that I rocked my babies in my arms ... and now I'm able to hold my beautiful granddaughter Daniela instead! We are most fortunate that her parents Christopher and Anabela live close by; David and I are both proud grandparents and eager babysitters!

*Heather Picton*

## ADHASA NEWS

### Office News

ADHASA National Office is now open every weekday during school term. Hours are from 08h00 to 14h00 Mondays to Thursdays and 08h00 to 13h00 on Fridays.

Come along and meet us and find out what we do. Ask for advice on AD/HD related issues and find out about suitable supplements (essential fatty acids, vitamins and minerals) which we have on sale. Have a look at the wonderful range of books we're selling, pick up information leaflets and, if you are a paid-up member, borrow a book from our AD/HD lending library. Our "Recommended Foodlist" has been a great help to many.

A shortage of volunteers left us unable to keep the office open on a regular basis. We are now pleased to announce that Lynne Visagie has agreed to run the office and keep it open every day during school term.

Sandy remains involved but cannot give the same amount of time as before, especially as she is baby-sitting her grandchild while her daughter-in-law settles in Johannesburg. Few people realise how many hours Sandy has spent on ADHASA work over the past few years. 60 hour weeks were not uncommon.

This leaves Lynne with a tremendous work load which cannot all be done alone, in the time available. Once more we are asking for volunteers to help Lynne in the office one morning a week.

If you can give just a few hours a week, please contact us on (011) 888 7655.

The following are just some of the areas where you could assist:

- selling of supplements/sweets
- processing membership applications
- arranging meetings

- help with Seminar—urgent!!
- general admin in office
- answering the phone/taking messages
- updating information
- building referral and resource lists

### Seminar

Clear the weekend of 8 & 9 Sept in your diary! Last year's Seminar was another great success and this year's is going to be even better.

Once again it is to be held in collaboration with the University of the Witwatersrand so be sure that you book your place ASAP. We'll soon have further details on the website.



**Kirsty-lee Torrie at Blairgowrie Spar on the highly successful Spar Shopping Day!**

### Placement Student

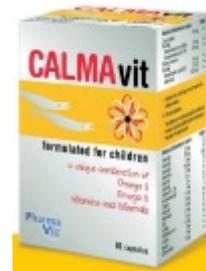
Kirsty-lee Torrie from the University of Lincoln was the first placement student to spend time in ADHASA. Kirsty's enthusiasm and willingness to learn served her well as she spent a few weeks in Forest Town School, and also worked in the various departments of ADHASA. She did most of the preparation for the 'Spar Shopping Day' which drew people from miles around because it made their shopping so much easier.

### Food List Research

We would like to embark upon a major food research project which could bring 'ADHASA shopping days' closer to your area. All we need is about five volunteers who could spend a few hours on Thursday mornings over the next 6 to 8 weeks at the Spar in Blairgowrie. Please let me know if you can help out. Phone Heather at 011-886-7668

### Something for nothing!!

It still happens sometimes .....  
The supplementation Calmavit is now stocked by Dischem and, to celebrate, the suppliers are giving one free container of 90 Calmavit capsules



for every one bought at Dischem. Claim your free Calmavit supplements by faxing your Dischem till slip showing the Calmavit purchase to Tracy du Preez at Fax No 011-468-3539 with your details. She'll arrange for the free Calmavit to be sent to you.

Alternately you could take your till slip to National Office at Delta Park School (see office hours) where you will be given your free Calmavit.

If you buy one container of Calmavit you get one free. If you buy more containers of Calmavit, you'll be getting a free Calmavit for each one shown on the purchase slip!!!

Offer lasts until the end of July 2007.



This edition of  
"Keeping up with ADD"  
kindly put together for us

by Lori Lea;

Executive, Life and ADD Coach  
of Mind Focus

[www.MindFocus.co.za](http://www.MindFocus.co.za)



Mind Focus cc

For a COMPLIMENTARY  
(1,5 hours) session to learn about  
how coaching  
can and will enhance  
your life, phone Lori now  
on 082-787-0262  
to book an appointment!