Today’s piece was prepared by Julia Reece, MS-4, from ADDitude Magazine, based on an article, “The Sugar Wars: Using Diet to Treat ADHD Symptoms in Children,” <http://www.additudemag.com/adhd/article/2861.html>

This article is the 5th hit using Google search for “sugar and ADD.” It states that increased sugar consumption makes hyperactive kids more “destructive and restless” and “may increase inattention in ADHD kids.” The author, identified on the ADDitude website as a food and nutrition researcher at Purdue University (and who is listed instead as a research technician on Purdue’s Nutrition Science webpage), cites studies from the University of South Carolina and from Yale University. References, however, are not available anywhere on the page, and hyperlinks within the article only lead to the universities’ general websites.

Despite this article’s lack of providing scientific evidence, clinicians who read the article may be better equipped to respond to concerned parents who search the internet for answers using frequent terms or phrases that are based on popular concerns or even rumor, rather than on rigorous scientific foundations. While parents’ interests to feed their children more healthy food should be supported, non-evidence-based assertions that sugar “causes” worse ADHD symptoms may lead parents to underestimate the legitimacy of their child’s condition, and as a result may tend to adhere less to evidence-based treatment and behavioral recommendations.

Currently, there is little evidence that consuming refined sugar contributes meaningfully to symptoms of ADHD among the vast majority of children.

The following resources may interest families:

**RESOURCES FOR FAMILIES ON ADHD DIET AND MANAGEMENT:**

National Resource Center on ADHD: Medication Management *Program of CHADD*

<http://help4adhd.org/en/treatment/medication>

<http://www.chadd.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Attention_Magazine&Template=/CM/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=10218>

Diet and AD/HD *CHADD “Ask The Expert” professionally-refereed newsletter*

<http://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/adhd/Pages/Your-Childs-Diet-A-Cause-and-a-Cure-of-ADHD.aspx>  
Your child’s diet: A Cause and a Cure of ADHD? *Healthy Children (American Academy of Pediatrics)*

**Literature references:**

1. [Ballard W](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov.offcampus.lib.washington.edu/pubmed?term=%22Ballard%20W%22%5BAuthor%5D), [Hall MN](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov.offcampus.lib.washington.edu/pubmed?term=%22Hall%20MN%22%5BAuthor%5D), [Kaufmann L](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov.offcampus.lib.washington.edu/pubmed?term=%22Kaufmann%20L%22%5BAuthor%5D). Clinical inquiries. Do dietary interventions **i**mprove ADHD symptoms in children?[*J Fam Pract.*](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov.offcampus.lib.washington.edu/pubmed/20398584)2010 Apr;59(4):234-5.
2. Kim Y, Chang H. Correlation between attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and sugar consumption, quality of diet, and dietary behavior in school children. *Nutr Res Pract.* 2011 Jun;5(3):236-45. Epub 2011 Jun 21.