Today’s piece was prepared by Rachel Pokorney, MD and is based on a story from NPR’s Morning Edition, entitled “For Kids With ADHD, Some Foods May Complement Treatment.”

<http://www.npr.org/blogs/thesalt/2012/01/09/144796050/for-kids-with-adhd-the-elimination-diet-falls-short-of-success>

This article and radio clip from NPR are based on an overview article published in Pediatrics <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/early/2012/01/04/peds.2011-2199.abstract?sid=462a5e02-b2da-4086-9379-fcb4933737bf>

addressing ADHD and diet. Diet influence on ADHD was made popular in the 1970-80s with elimination diets (e.g., Feingold, refined sugars, or oligoantigens) and while controversial, have generally been found to be of limited symptomatic benefit, with some exceptions.

The article includes three major dietary recommendations for children with ADHD:

1. Provide a protein-rich breakfast to prevent hunger.
2. Restrict high-sugar and highly processed foods, and focus on a healthy diet that includes fruits and vegetables, whole grains, fish, and low-fat dairy products.
3. Include fish oil and omega-3 fatty acid supplementation.

This piece makes conclusions based on both the review article and the opinions of its interviewees. For example, children with ADHD often experience hunger suppression as a medication side effect and from ADHD overstimulation that makes it difficulty for them to sit down and eat breakfast, resulting in hunger later in the day, so that protein-rich foods can keep them feeling fuller longer. A referenced Australian study demonstrated higher “levels” (undefined) of ADHD in children who eat a more “western” (processed food, sugary drinks, etc) compared to those who eat a “healthy” diet. Inconclusive scientific, but supportive anecdotal, evidence on fish oil/omega-3 is also provided. NPR interviews three people for their story, including the mother of a child with ADHD a psychiatrist , and the study’s lead author. All three support the review article’s findings that elimination diets can be cumbersome, difficult, and ineffective for the vast majority of patients with ADHD when used alone, but that certain dietary improvements can be beneficial when used as complementary treatment to stimulant medication.

**RESOURCES ON ADHD FOR PROVIDERS:**

American Academy of Pediatrics ADHD Tools (<http://www.nichq.org/adhd.html>)

Complementary/Alternative & lifestyle in ADHD: How to approach patients. (Kathi Kemper 2007) (<https://depts.washington.edu/dbpeds/Secure/LifestyleAndCAMinADHD.doc>)

And that’s today’s Developmental & Behavioral Pediatrics: IN THE NEWS!