

## AYURVEDIC APPROACH TO ADHD IN CHILDREN: A HOLISTIC MANAGEMENT PERSPECTIVE

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### ABSTRACT

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is a neurodevelopmental disorder commonly diagnosed in childhood, characterized by inattention, hyperactivity, and impulsivity. While modern medicine addresses ADHD primarily through pharmacological and behavioral strategies, Ayurveda provides a holistic perspective focused on doshic imbalances, particularly of Vata dosha. This article explores ADHD through Ayurvedic theory, highlighting conceptual understanding, symptom correlation, and integrative management strategies including ahara (diet), vihara (lifestyle), aushadhi (herbs), and Panchakarma therapies.

### INTRODUCTION

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is a neurodevelopmental condition commonly diagnosed in childhood. It is characterized by symptoms of inattention, hyperactivity, and impulsiveness. From the Ayurvedic perspective, ADHD is not classified by a specific name, but its signs and symptoms can be understood through the imbalance of doshas, particularly Vata dosha. Ayurveda offers a holistic approach that includes diet, lifestyle, herbs, and therapies to support children with ADHD.

### Ayurvedic View of ADHD

In Ayurveda, the human body is governed by three doshas – Vata, Pitta, and Kapha. Each dosha is responsible for specific physiological and psychological functions.

### 1. Dosha Imbalanc

In Ayurveda, the symptoms of ADHD primarily reflect an imbalance in Vata Dosha, especially Prana Vata, which governs mental functions like attention, memory, and coordination.

- Vata dominance leads to restlessness, lack of attention, and instability.
- In some cases, Rajo Guna (activity and motion) in the mind becomes excessive, leading to hyperactivity.
- Manovaha Srotas (channels of the mind) are often affected, leading to dysfunction in mental faculties.
- In ADHD, there is typically a Vata imbalance, especially in the manovaha srotas (channels of the mind). Excess Vata may lead to restlessness, lack of focus, hyperactivity, and emotional instability.

### 2. Gunas (Qualities of Mind)

**Rajas:** Promotes activity, excitement – excessive Rajas contributes to hyperactivity and impulsivity.

**Tamas:** Causes inertia and confusion – its increase can lead to inattentiveness or dullness.

**Sattva:** The ideal quality for balance, clarity, and mental health.

### 3. Dhi, Dhriti, Smriti

These are higher mental functions:

**Dhi** – Intelligence (decision making)

**Dhriti** – Retention (focus)

**Smriti** – Memory

In ADHD, all three are impaired due to Vata and Raja-Tama vitiation.

### Understanding ADHD in Modern Medicine

#### Core Symptoms

1. **Inattention** – difficulty sustaining focus, disorganization.
2. **Hyperactivity** – excessive movement, restlessness.
3. **Impulsivity** – acting without thought, interrupting others.

#### Causes

- Genetic factors
- Neurotransmitter imbalances (especially dopamine)

- Environmental factors
- Prenatal exposure to toxins or stress

### **Symptoms of ADHD (Ayurvedic Interpretation)**

- Chanchalata (Restlessness)
- Alpa Smriti (Poor memory)
- Avadhanabhramsha (Lack of concentration)
- Ashanti (Mental unrest)
- Aswasthata (Hyperactivity)
- Alpatnidra (Disturbed sleep)
- Ayurvedic Causes (Nidana)
- Poor prenatal nutrition or maternal stress
- Improper diet (junk food, processed foods, incompatible food combinations)
- Excess screen time or overexposure to stimulating environments
- Irregular routines and sleep habits
- Emotional trauma or anxiety

### **Management of ADHD in Ayurveda**

#### **1. Diet and Nutrition (Ahara)**

Emphasize Vata-pacifying diet: warm, cooked, nourishing meals, Include ghee, milk, almonds, dates, and whole grains.

**Avoid** -refined sugar, caffeine, carbonated drinks, and cold foods.

**Use**- calming herbs and spices like brahmi, ashwagandha, shankhpushpi, turmeric, and ginger.

#### **2. Lifestyle (Vihara)**

- Establish regular routines for meals, study, play, and sleep.
- Encourage outdoor play and physical grounding activities like yoga.
- Limit screen time.
- Provide a calm, loving environment free from excessive stimulation.

#### **3. Herbal Support (Aushadhi)**

Ayurvedic herbs that are commonly used include

- **Brahmi (Bacopa monnieri):** Enhances cognitive function, calms the nervous system.

- **Ashwagandha (*Withania somnifera*):** Reduces anxiety, strengthens immunity.
- **Shankhpushpi (*Convolvulus pluricaulis*):** Improves memory and reduces mental fatigue.
- **Mandukaparni (*Centella asiatica*):** Boosts brain function and concentration.
- **Jyotishmati(*Celastrus peniculatis*):** Traditionally used to support intellectual development.
- **Vacha(*Acorus calamus*):** Reduces speech issues and hyperactivity.

#### 4. Panchakarma and Therapies

##### Gentle detox and rejuvenation therapies may help

- **Shirodhara (oil pouring on the forehead):** Calms the mind and nervous system.
- **Abhyanga (oil massage):** Grounds excess Vata, improves sleep and focus.
- **Nasya (nasal administration of medicated oils):** Enhances brain function.

These treatments should be personalized and performed under professional supervision.

#### 5. Yoga and Meditation

Simple yoga poses and breathing exercises (pranayama) help children gain better body awareness and mental calm:

- Balasana (Child's Pose)
- Tadasana (Mountain Pose)
- Nadi Shodhana (Alternate Nostril Breathing)
- Bhramari (Bee Breath)
- Mindfulness activities like guided meditation or storytelling with moral values help improve attention span.

#### CONCLUSION

Ayurveda provides a holistic, natural, and child-friendly approach to managing ADHD by addressing the root imbalances rather than just suppressing symptoms. Through a combination of diet, herbs, lifestyle modifications, therapies, and emotional support, children with ADHD can thrive and reach their full potential. It is essential to consult a qualified Ayurvedic practitioner for personalized guidance and care.

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