
Food Is Your Best Medicine: Get Started on the Amen Clinics 3-Week Elimination Diet



Your brain uses 25% of the calories that you consume and is the most energy-hungry organ in your body. Most people don't know that they can use food to manipulate their minds. Food can help you feel relaxed, happy, and focused... or downright dumb. Here are our 9 Rules for Brain Healthy Eating that can radically improve ADD symptoms, no matter which type.

9 Rules of Brain Healthy Eating

Rule #1. Think “high-quality calories” and not too many of them if weight is an issue.

The quality of your food matters, so always opt for high-quality food.

Rule #2. Drink plenty of water and don't drink your calories.

Your brain is 80% water. Anything that dehydrates it, such as too much caffeine or alcohol, decreases your thinking and impairs your judgment. Drink about ½ your weight in ounces of water per day.

Rule #3. Eat high-quality, clean protein throughout the day.

Protein helps balance your blood sugar, helps you focus, and provides the necessary building blocks for brain health. Start each day with protein to boost your focus and concentration skills!

Make it clean to avoid hormones and toxins. When possible eat hormone free, antibiotic free, free range, grass fed meat.

Rule #4. Eat smart carbohydrates (low glycemic, high fiber).

“Smart” carbohydrates are ones that don’t spike your blood sugar (low-glycemic index) and are also high in fiber, such as vegetables and fruits like blueberries and apples. Carbs are not the enemy... but bad carbohydrates are. Sugar is NOT your friend – it increases erratic brain cell firing, is addictive, has been implicated in aggression, and increases inflammation in the body and the brain.

Rule #5. Focus your diet on healthy fats.

Fat is not the enemy, and good fats are essential to your health. The solid weight of your brain is 60% fat (after the water is removed) and 20% cholesterol. Focus your diet on healthy fats, especially those that contain omega-3 fatty acids; from foods like salmon, sardines, avocados, walnuts, flaxseed, chia seed, and dark green leafy vegetables.

Rule #6. Eat from the rainbow.

Put natural foods of many different colors into your diet; include blueberries, pomegranates, yellow squash, and red bell peppers. This will boost the antioxidant levels in your body and help keep your brain young!

Rule #7. Cook with brain-healthy herbs and spices to boost your brain.

Here’s a little food for thought...

- ◆ There is good scientific evidence that rosemary, thyme, and sage help boost memory.
 - ◆ Cinnamon has been shown to help attention and blood sugar.
 - ◆ Garlic and oregano boost blood flow to the brain.
 - ◆ In 3 studies, a saffron extract was found to be as effective as antidepressant medication in treating people with major depression!
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Rule #8. Make sure your food is as clean as possible.

As much as possible:

- ◆ Eat organically grown or raised foods, as pesticides used in commercial farming can accumulate in your brain and body, even though the levels in each food may be low.
- ◆ Additionally, eliminate food additives, preservatives, and artificial dyes and sweeteners.

Rule #9. We believe all people with ADD/ADHD should try an elimination diet for 3 weeks, especially eliminating wheat, other gluten-containing grains or foods, dairy, soy, and corn.

Did you know that gluten can literally make some people crazy? In our experience, ADD-affected and autistic children and adults often do better when they get rid of wheat, dairy, all the processed foods, all forms of sugar and sugar alternatives, food dyes, and additives.

We are coming to understand that subtle but important food sensitivities may result in brain inflammation that contributes to many of the brain issues we see at Amen Clinics, including ADD. These food sensitivities can be delayed in the sense that ***adverse reactions may occur up to several days after consuming the foods.***

Conventional medicine has tended to ignore the role and significance that adverse food reactions play in ADD. However, we believe and have seen in our clinic that these foods may create a metabolic disorder that can lead to many “mental” symptoms, including:

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| • Fatigue | • Depression |
| • Brain fog | • Bipolar conditions |
| • Slowed thinking | • ADD |
| • Irritability | • Learning disabilities |
| • Agitation | • Autism |
| • Aggression | • Schizophrenia |
| • Anxiety | • Dementia |
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The common food culprits that tend to weaken the immune system include:

- Gluten: *wheat, rye, barley, oats, kamut, spelt*
- Dairy: *milk, cheese, ice cream, butter, yogurt*
- Corn
- Soy
- Citrus
- Sugar
- Grains: *including oats, rice, millet*
- Yeast: *baker's yeast, brewer's yeast, fermented foods*
- Nightshades: *tomato, peppers, potato, eggplant*
- Synthetic flavors, colors, sweeteners, preservatives & additives

What is an Elimination Diet?

An elimination diet is a strategic eating plan designed to remove the foods that commonly trigger adverse food reactions for three weeks, then reintroduce them slowly, one by one, so that you may identify the foods that may be causing problems.

The elimination period allows time for:

- The inflammatory response to calm down inside the body and brain
- The gut to restore integrity and health
- The liver to clear the byproducts of adverse reactions

Elimination diets are wonderful because they are more affordable than blood tests, and they allow the opportunity to better understand your own body.
