

## ADD/ADHD

# Holistic and Natural Approaches

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### ● TRADITIONAL CHINESE MEDICINE

Western medicine and traditional Chinese medicine have different approaches to diagnosing and treating attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder. In the West, ADHD sufferers are usually prescribed anti-depressants or stimulants, such as Ritalin or Adderall. However, while prescription drugs may temporarily alleviate symptoms, they don't treat the core problems. In addition, parents are often concerned about the effectiveness of prescription medication and the possible side effects. In Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), ADHD is attributed to an imbalance between yin and yang, the negative and positive phases in the body's flow of vital energy, or qi. TCM comprises acupuncture, Chinese herbs, Tui-Na massage and nutritional therapy. It's founded on the belief that good health is a function of inner harmony.

Treatment focuses on correcting the imbalance by applying the yin and yang theory. For example, a child with a yang (active) nature would receive treatment for the hyperactive, impulsive type of ADHD, as opposed to a child with a yin (passive) nature, who would be treated for inattentiveness. Once a pattern is diagnosed, acupuncture, Tui-Na massage and, in some cases, herbs are used to restore balance and a sense of relaxation and well-being. For children and infants, a non-needling modality of acupuncture called Shonishin is recommended before introducing needles. It consists of using small tools in a gentle stroking, rubbing or tapping manner to stimulate the child's qi. Over the years, large strides have been made to treat ADHD with a combination of TCM and lifestyle changes. In cases of mild ADHD, TCM can be used as the sole form of treatment, eliminating the need for prescription drugs. For more severe cases, TCM is often used in conjunction with western medicine to help lower the dosage of medication needed or to reduce the side effects of prescription drugs.

Sharing in their child's lifestyle changes can offer important benefits to parents as well, and they should also try to live balanced lives. Diet, physical exercise, yoga and meditation—or even simply some alone time—can all help parents restore balance and energy in their lives while reflecting positively on their children.

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