

## **ADD, Asthma, or Additives?**

The holidays are here! Candy canes and sugar cookies, gift baskets filled with treats. We can't avoid them. How do we get through the holidays without loading our kids (and ourselves) up with sugar and even worse, artificial additives? Should we even worry about it? Yes, we should! Artificial additives (colorings, flavorings and preservatives) can affect behavior and cause symptoms such as



*Impatience, short attention span, poor sleep habits, hyperactivity, aggression, impulsivity, physical complaints such as headache, stomachache, asthma and hives, neuromuscular problems such as poor coordination, difficulty in speech or dyslexia.*

Not everyone is sensitive to artificial additives but children (and adults) with chemically sensitive systems may react quite severely to them in their food or their environment.

### **What are food additives made of?**

Food dyes used to be made from coal or tar oil but are now made from petroleum. Artificial flavorings can be made from almost anything. One single flavoring can be made from hundreds of chemicals. The preservatives BHA, BHT and TBHQ are made from petroleum.

### **Which ones are the worst offenders?**

*Food dyes* often labeled as "food coloring", "artificial colors", "FD&C Yellow #5, etc". Some artificial colors use coal or tar dyes. *Artificial flavorings* sometimes labeled as "flavourings". Vanillin is a synthetic vanilla flavor. Three antioxidant preservatives *BHA, BHT, TBHQ*.

### **What about other additives?**

The additives mentioned above have been found to be a major source of learning and behavior problems. Other additives such as MSG, corn syrup, nitrites and sulfating agents may cause symptoms in individuals. If you find that these cause you or your child any adverse symptoms, then they should be avoided. It is recommended that artificial sweeteners such as aspartame and saccharin be avoided as well.

### **What is the proof?**

There are a number of research studies linking diet to learning and behavior, particularly ADD/ADHD. Check out this site for more information: <http://www.feingold.org/research-pg.html>

### **How do we eliminate the additives?**

Start slow. Read the labels. Look for the "all natural" varieties. There are many all natural and tasty products available. Remember, *substitute don't deprive!* For the difficult or picky eater, substitute one product at a time. For example, choose *Kix* instead of *Corn Pops* at the supermarket. Tell your child they did not have his usual variety. Take it from there!

### **Where can I get more information?**

Go to the Feingold Association's website <http://www.feingold.org/home.html>