

## Fish Oil to Boost Attention

Boosting attention span in teenagers seems to be one of parents largest concerns, especially in this digital age where information overload means that attention spans for all people are declining to fit the 30 second commercial window. The majority of prescriptions for ADD or ADHD are stimulants, which can be tremendously helpful but also have significant side effects. Many parents are looking for more natural alternatives or adjuncts when the medications just aren't enough.

Fish oil is gaining in both popularity and credibility as an aid to attention and focus as well as to help nourish the growing brains of children and adolescents. Research has been accumulating steadily to support fish oil as a support for memory and attention, and more importantly establishing that a deficiency of omega-3 fatty acids as one of the contributing factors to low-attention states including ADD, ADHD and autism. A [2001 study by Dr. AJ Richardson](#) states "deficiencies or imbalances in certain highly unsaturated fatty acids (HUFA) of the omega-3 and omega-6 series may contribute to both the predisposition and the developmental expression of dyslexia, dyspraxia, ADHD and autism." Also important is that there is no known interaction between fish oils and ADHD medications so these therapies are safe to use together.

As a parent then, what is the best choice for finding a fish oil? One key component is how likely it is that your child will actually take it. Many children can't swallow the typically large softgel size for fish oil supplements and so palatable liquid fish oils or tiny child-sized softgels limit the options. At Peoples Rx our most popular "kid-approved" fish oil liquid is Barleans Omega Swirl, which has a variety of flavors that will please most children and adolescents and even tastes good enough for them to ask for doses. Also, Nordic Naturals makes a strawberry flavored Children's DHA that is small enough to be swallowed easily by most and delicious enough to be chewed if necessary.

Dosing is another controversial question and most of the research in the literature looks at childrens doses of roughly 1,000 mg of combined EPA and DHA per day. These are considerably high doses and so for many parents the liquid provides a simple way to get higher doses into a child, simply because you can fit more fish oil in a tablespoon than you can in two softgels. Also many families report that they needed more than the typical dose to see results. Fortunately quality fish oils that have been tested for purity, as all of the products at Peoples Rx have been, have a high margin of safety and so dosing is flexible. Attention issues can be linked to deficiencies of valuable omega-3 fatty acids and this should be taken as seriously as any other nutritional deficiency. Supplementing with those fatty acids, including EPA and DHA can help boost focus and attention.

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