

# Readin', Writin', and Ritalin



## Beware the ADD label if your child:

1. Often fidgets and squirms in his/her seat.
2. Has difficulty remaining seated when required.
3. Is easily distracted.
4. Often blurts out answers to questions before they have been completed.
5. Has difficulty awaiting his/her turn during games.
6. Has difficulty following instructions.
7. Jumps from one thing to another.
8. Often talks excessively.
9. Interrupts others.
10. Often loses things.
11. Does not seem to listen.
12. Has difficulty playing quietly.

**R**italin has been called "Teacher's Little Helper." This popular drug is widely prescribed to "treat" the condition called Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), or commonly referred to as simply "hyperactivity."

The number of children given this drug has risen by hundreds of per cent in the last 10 years or so, much to the delight of the shareholders of Ciba-Geigy, the drug's manufacturer. The US and Canada are leading the parade in Ritalin use, while European countries are far down the list. Maybe children across the ocean are different. Or maybe it's marketing.

### Take the ADHD Quiz

It seems as if every child today is being labeled with ADHD. The criteria used to make this diagnosis fits almost every child encountered in practice (see side bar, above). In his book *The War on Children*, Dr Peter Breggin says ADHD tends to be a middle class diagnosis.

If your child displays at least eight of these criteria, he is a candidate for the ADHD diagnosis. (All of a sudden I'm very concerned about myself and most of my friends and colleagues!) These criteria sound like a normal, healthy, exuberant, bored child. Many authorities feel that these chil-

dren are actually quite gifted and are right-brained or creative. They function with two speeds; hyperdrive and collapse; there is no in-between. They are also highly visual and non-sequential processors. In other words, they learn by pictures in a non-traditional manner.

These children, many feel, are "scanners." They scan life and the world around them in the same manner as they scan a computer screen. Some authorities also feel that they are a product of our fast-paced, overstimulated culture. To that end, I must applaud Waldorf schools, founded by Rudolf Steiner. They frown on the use of computers in their teaching methods.

Ask yourself the question, "what if Einstein and Edison were on Ritalin?" If they were born today, they would surely have been labeled ADHD. Both had been expelled from school for disruptive behavior.

Most parents do not realize that there are no laboratory tests for ADHD; that this diagnosis is made purely on observation and is most often initiated by a teacher who is having difficulty controlling the behavior of a certain child. This is an observa-





tion and is not meant as an attack on teachers. These children need a different teaching method, difficult in school systems that demand obedience and conformity.

Rather than use the term ADHD, Dr Breggin called it DADD—Dad Attention Deficit Disorder. He feels that a lack of parental attention and lack of discipline very often leads to the diagnosis of ADHD. I agree that this could be true in certain cases.

Other health professionals feel ADHD is caused by a lack of certain minerals and neurochemicals in the body. The late Dr Robert Mendelson, MD, one of the most respected pediatricians in North America and a self-proclaimed medical heretic once told me that it is our perception which may be at fault. "Is it the child who

is hyperactive," he asked, "or is it that the average earthling is no longer excited about life?"

### **Rampaging Ritalin**

To treat this "affliction," children are placed on Ritalin, a Class II narcotic.

To bring this into perspective, Class I narcotics are those substances for which there is no legitimate use. Even a licensed physician can't prescribe these substances (like LSD).

Class II are those substances that are also addictive but have limited medical value. Case in point: Ritalin. Cocaine and opium fall into this category also. Class III and IV are substances which have the potential for abuse, such as Valium and other barbiturates.

Most parents may not realize that Ritalin is a highly addictive, psychotropic drug. It alters behavior and a child's perception of the world. The purpose of this drug is to force the child to obey. I feel Ritalin robs children of their individuality.

Are we turning our children into robots? This drug is so popular that toddlers are the new target market. As a matter of fact, other drug companies, in their quest for a share of the market, are now suggesting that children be placed on Prozac. This is not OK!

There have been few conclusive research studies done on the long-term effects of Ritalin. However, Johnson and Stewart found that:

- 83 per cent of children on Ritalin had trouble with frequent lying



- 60 per cent were still overactive and rebellious
- 59 per cent had contact with police
- 52 per cent were destructive
- 34 per cent threatened to kill their parents
- 15 per cent contemplated suicide

### A Better Way!

Chiropractic doctors have been successfully helping ADHD children for years. We often find that an interference with the function of the nervous system, caused by a vertebral subluxation in the spine, is at the heart of the

matter. These vertebral subluxations can be the result of a difficult birth and interfere with normal nervous system function.

A vertebral subluxation is an irritant to the nervous system. It is similar to having a pebble placed in your shoe that you can't get rid of! Chiropractic care is directed at correcting these subluxations, thereby making the child's nervous system function normally. It's that simple.

If your child has been labeled ADHD or is in the process of being labeled, my suggestion would be to consult a pediatric chiropractor or other natural health practitioner without delay. ■

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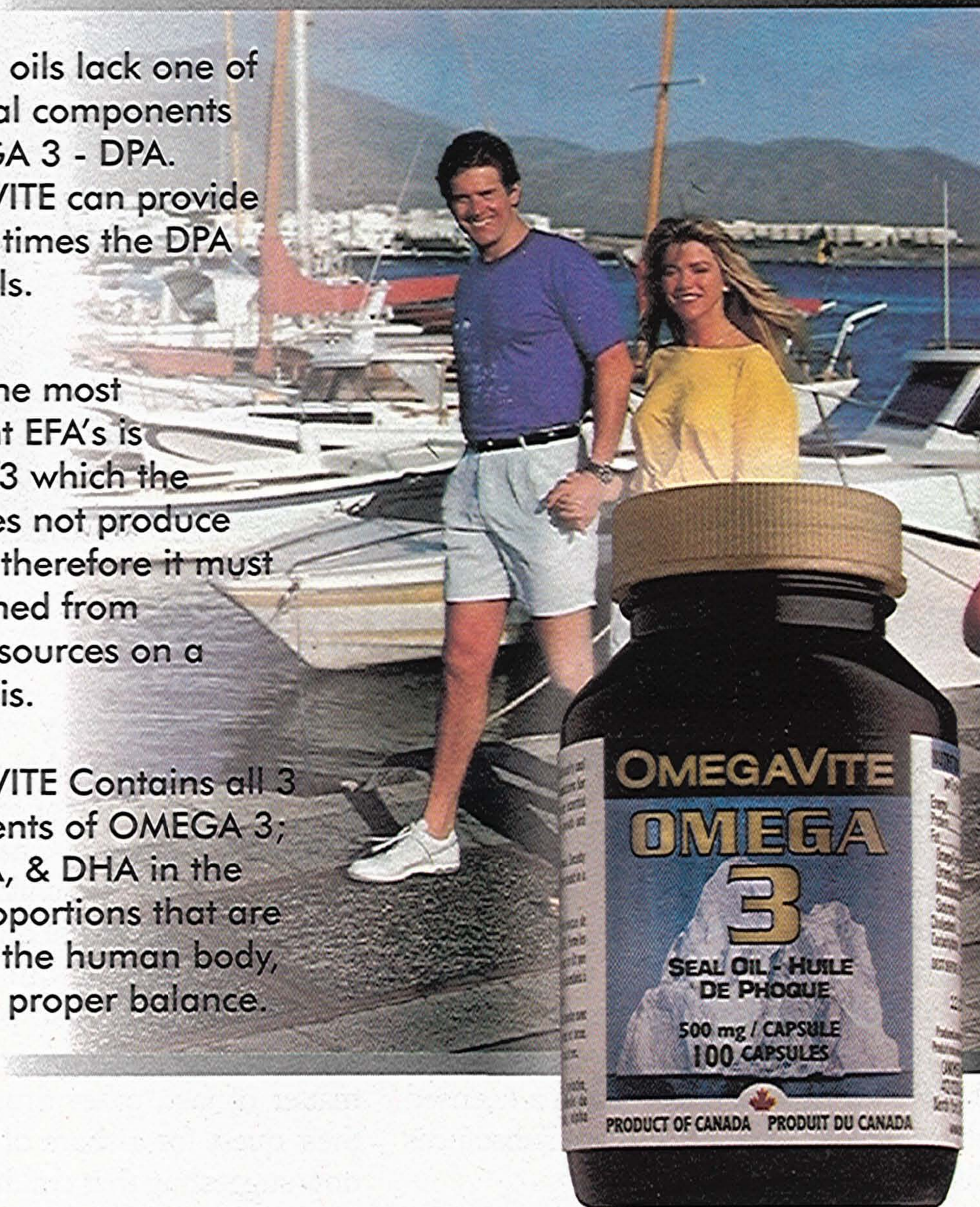
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### ADD or Nutrient Deficiency?

In the last decade or so, a number of research studies into children diagnosed with ADD and learning disabilities have pointed to two main causes: nutritional deficiencies and heavy metal toxicity from environmental pollutants. The following seven nutrients have been known to either enhance brain function or detoxify the body—and sometimes both.

**Fish and fish oils:** fish has a high content of the omega-3 essential fatty acid called docosahexaenoic acid (DHA). DHA is the building block of our brain tissue and is found especially concentrated in the brain's grey matter.

**Evening primrose:** the evening primrose flower is one of the best sources of another essential fatty acid, an omega-6 called gamma-linolenic acid (GLA). Like DHA from fish, GLA is an important brain-development nutrient and is easily incorporated into brain lipids or fats.

**Phosphatidylserine (PS):** is the most abundant and important of the brain phospholipids, or "good" fats. It helps keep brain cell membranes healthy and fluid so that cells can easily communicate.

**L-Glutamine and N-Acetylcysteine:** L-Glutamine, or simply glutamine, is known as brain fuel. It easily passes through the blood-brain barrier and converts to glutamic acid, an essential factor of proper brain function. N-Acetylcysteine (NAC) is an extremely powerful detoxifier of environmental pollutants. In combination with glutamine, NAC is known to raise levels of a compound called glutathione, itself an important antioxidant, also required for proper brain function.

**Grape seed extract:** its superior antioxidant properties are about 50 times stronger than vitamins C and E. A flavonoid known as a proanthocyanidin, grape seed extract has shown a remarkable ability to protect the body's fat (including the brain) from free radical damage due to environmental toxins, including heavy metals.

**Spirulina:** for its detoxifying power and general nutritional quality, spirulina is perhaps the most complete of the green "super foods." Spirulina is an easily digestible microalgae containing high amounts of protein, GLA, amino acids and the nucleic acids RNA and DNA.

—Jason Sebeslav