

Kids Move To The Head Of The Class With Back-To-School Brain Health Products

by Bend Weekly News Sources

Multivitamins and supplements support brain function, strong immune systems, regular sleep cycles and kids' overall health

As parents are shopping with their kids to get ready for the new school year, there are some things that are even more important to consider than new jeans, shoes, notebooks and backpacks – food and supplements to support brain health, keeping children healthy, focused and happy, and ultimately setting them up for success in the classroom. Tricia DiPersio, Ph.D., R.D., corporate dietitian for Wild Oats Natural Marketplace is recommending parents put kid-friendly multivitamins with essential daily nutrients on their back-to-school shopping lists. Parents may also want to consider specific supplements that support brain function, strong immune systems, regular sleep cycles and may even help manage behavioral problems. A range of products to support kids' brain health are available in all Wild Oats Markets across the country.

“Children need certain nutrients to keep them healthy in all areas of their lives,” said Dr. DiPersio. “These back-to-school brain health products contain Omega-3-rich fish oil, which helps support healthy brain development, magnesium which may help manage certain behavioral problems, vitamin C to fight colds, calcium for strong bones and much more. These products make the grade and make it easy for parents to give their children what they need to perform at their best this school year.”

Take Omega-3s to Boost Brain Function

According to a study conducted by Purdue University, children deficient in Omega-3 fatty acids were more likely to suffer from attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), a neurobehavioral disorder defined as age-inappropriate impulsiveness, lack of concentration and sometimes excessive physical activity.

The fraction of Omega-3 fatty acids known as docosahexaenoic acid (DHA), found in fish oil, is an important nutrient for the brain. Studies have shown that DHA may play an important role in brain development and reducing cognitive decline. DHA may also play a role in managing behavior and mood, as the Purdue study found, and it may help some children be more productive in school.

“Fish oil is a great source of Omega-3 fatty acids and DHA. Choose fish oil supplements derived from short-lived safe species, such as anchovies and sardines, or from microalgae (for vegetarians or vegans) to help optimize brain development and function,” said Dr. DiPersio. “Consuming a half-teaspoon of one of these oils daily may be beneficial for kids. And they come in tasty flavors, too. Better yet, if your kids enjoy a variety of foods, they can get Omega-3s from fresh wild salmon or Omega-3 enriched eggs.”

Consider Natural Remedies for ADHD

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 4.4 million children ages 4-17 have been diagnosed with ADHD by a health care professional, and in 2003, 2.5 million children in that age range were receiving prescription drugs to treat the disorder. Despite these high numbers of children taking ADHD medication, parents are increasingly seeking natural remedies such as diet modification and homeopathy because of the drugs' negative side effects.

“Fish oil, L-carnitine and magnesium supplements could help control ADHD-related behavioral issues in children naturally,” Dr. DiPersio continued. “Diet changes that eliminate additives, dyes and chemicals could also help since children with ADHD seem to be more likely to suffer from food allergies than other children.”

Avoid Saturated Fats, Ensure Nutrient Intake with Multivitamins

A Journal of Nutrition study conducted in August 2005 found connections between saturated fats and brain function in kids. For instance, cholesterol intake was found to reduce children's performance on memory tests. With each 100mg intake of cholesterol, poor performance on the test increased by 25 percent.

“Healthy, nutritious lunches and snacks like lean, natural deli turkey on whole grain bread and organic, squeezable fruit yogurt are foods that keep children properly fueled throughout the school day,” said Dr. DiPersio. “Adding multivitamins to this mix ensures kids get the nutrients they need to keep their energy high and immune systems strong.”

Wild Oats™ Brain Health Shopping List

The following are a few of the products parents should move to the top of their back-to-school shopping lists:

Carlson for Kids: Chewable DHA – These orange-flavored chewable softgels are an easy-to-use source of the Omega-3 fatty acids and DHA that support healthy brain function and memory performance in children.

Source Naturals AttentiveChild, – Sweet and tart wafers designed to support children’s ability to focus with brain-essential ingredients such as dimethylaminoethanol (DMAE), magnesium, L-aspartate, grape seed extract and phosphatidylserine. DMAE has been shown to help enhance mental concentration, while magnesium has been found to positively impact neuromuscular transmission and activity, and may help manage behavioral problems. The amino acid L-aspartate acts as a neurotransmitter, grape seed extract is a powerful antioxidant and phosphatidylserine is a vital component of cell membranes in the brain and throughout the body.

Animal Parade Vitamin C by Nature’s Plus – These chewable, orange-flavored tablets include citrus-based bioflavonoids, grape seed and bilberry extracts, and mango and papaya concentrates to help fight colds and to keep children’s immune systems strong.

Wild Oats Bengal Bites, – These chewable, all-natural berry-flavored multivitamins are shaped like Bengal tigers, and provide 100 percent of the recommended daily requirement of 11 vitamins and minerals that may be lacking in a child’s diet.

For more information about brain health for kids and to find the Wild Oats Natural Marketplace nearest you in Bend, Oregon, please visit www.wildoats.com.

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