



Awakenings Mental Health

Zinc

What is Zinc and Why is it Important?

Zinc is an essential mineral that plays a vital role in numerous bodily functions, including immune support and metabolism. In the brain, zinc is critical for the proper function of neurotransmitters. Specifically, it helps modulate the brain's dopamine system, which is responsible for regulating reward, focus, and motivation—key areas affected by ADHD.

The Link Between Zinc and ADHD

Research has consistently shown that individuals with ADHD, particularly children, often have lower levels of zinc compared to their peers without the condition. Because zinc is directly involved in producing and regulating dopamine, a deficiency can disrupt this system and may exacerbate ADHD symptoms like inattention and hyperactivity.

Uses & Benefits in ADHD

As a supplemental therapy, zinc is used to correct a potential deficiency and support the brain's executive functions.

Improves ADHD Symptoms:

Clinical trials, such as a 2015 study by Konikowska et al., have shown that zinc supplementation can lead to significant improvements in hyperactivity, impulsivity, and inattention as measured by standardized rating scales (Conners' scores).

Supports Dopamine Regulation:

By ensuring the brain has adequate zinc, it can more effectively manage its dopamine pathways.

Dosage:

A typical dose is 15–30 mg of elemental zinc daily. A trial period of 12 weeks is often recommended to assess its effectiveness.

Safety:

To avoid stomach upset, zinc should be taken with food. High doses of iron can interfere with zinc absorption, so their intake should be spaced apart.

Important Note:

Supplementation should be guided by a provider, ideally after lab testing has confirmed a deficiency.

Conclusion

For individuals with ADHD and low zinc levels, supplementation can be a safe and effective adjunctive therapy. By supporting the brain's dopamine system, zinc can help improve core ADHD symptoms as part of a comprehensive, medically supervised treatment plan.