

# Dyslexic Centre Australia

*Proudly supporting everyone who learns differently*

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## **Dyslexia & Nutritional Supplementation Mavis Carruthers ND** **February 2010**

Are you aware that some nutrients are essential for the development and maintenance for the nerves associated with learning?

Based on research it has been established that two important nutrients for brain cells involving reading are necessary. The research also identifies chemicals to be avoided.

**Omega 3 oils: EPA/DHA** “Many people with dyslexia or related conditions (such as dyspraxia or ADHD) show signs of being deficient in omega-3 unsaturated fatty acids that come from fish oils. Omega-3 deficiency may contribute to dyslexic problems because these fatty acids play an important part throughout life in the proper functioning of the brain cells involved in reading. So fish oil supplements may help both child and adult dyslexics, and we've recently completed randomized controlled trials that suggest that this is so.” (Dyslexia Research Trust UK) <http://www.dyslexic.org.uk/aboutdyslexia11.htm>

Symptoms specific to people with dyslexia of omega3 deficiency: visual symptoms e.g. letters and words may appear to move, swim or blur on the page; attention problems (poor concentration and difficulties in working memory); excessive mood swings or undue anxiety; sleep problems (difficulties in settling at night and waking in the morning)

- Supplements must be in the EPA/DHA form. (Flaxseed oil is not in this form)
- Fish such as salmon & sardines are high in omega 3 oils. Avoid tinned fish. Fresh fish is best!
- Supplemental omega 3 oil must have Vitamin E to be of maximum value.
- Liquid supplementation is better than capsules.

**Zinc** Research into dietary zinc has established high levels of deficiency in people of developed countries. Deficiency has been associated with behavioral disturbances and mental lethargy as well as dry eyes and mouth. An examination by a qualified health professional is necessary to ascertain whether a zinc deficiency is present. A simple taste test (Zinc test – Ethical Nutrients at pharmacies) will determine whether you are deficient in zinc or not. This is available at My Wellness Centre and is part of the Initial Assessment.

Supplementation is specific and short term. Long term supplementation of zinc on its own is dangerous! There are many reasons why zinc is not being absorbed, such as chronic anxiety, digestive disorders (Irritable Bowel, Crohn's Disease, Celiac Disease, Ulcerative Colitis, Anorexia), certain food chemicals. Finding the cause is as important as supplementing. Once the initial correction is made, whole food supplementation is recommended. Some foods containing zinc: almonds (soaked), chick peas, chicken, sunflower seeds, lentils, white beans, beef, oats, lima beans, kidney beans, black beans, walnuts, eggs, chicken.

[Am J Dis Child.](#) 1991 Aug; 145(8):853-9. "Zinc deficiency. A public health problem?" <http://dietary-supplements.info.nih.gov/FactSheets/Zinc.asp> USA  
National Institute of Health Office of Dietary Supplements