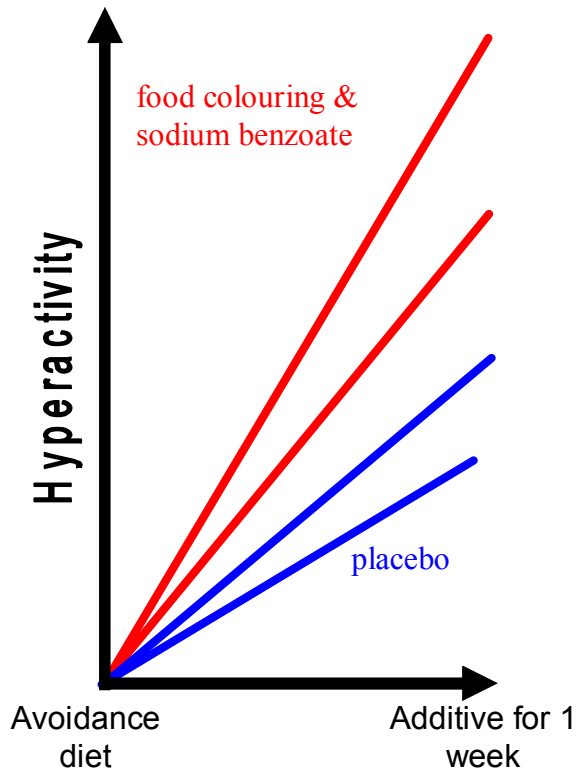


Food Additives and Behaviour

Food colourings have for many years been implicated in causing hyperactivity in some children. Until recently studies have not been able to substantiate a link.



A recent study however by Bateman and colleagues (Archives of Diseases in Childhood 2004) has shown that there appears a small, but definite effect of food colourings and sodium benzoate on childrens' levels of hyperactivity.

These changes were not sufficient to show on objective psychology measures, yet the parents could detect changes in their child when they were given a drink containing food colourings and sodium benzoate for 1 week compared to having a diet free of these. There was also an effect when a placebo was compared, but this was much less than the food colourings.

The study looked specifically at the following additives:-

Sodium benzoate	Preservative
Sunset yellow	Food colourings
Tartrazine	
Carmoisine	
Ponceau 4R	

If you have concerns regarding your child and hyperactivity we would suggest enlisting the assistance of others who have contact with your child (nursery/school teacher) to gain baseline information. Although studies have only looked at levels of hyperactivity in detail it would also be worth noting levels of concentration and impulsivity.

Remove all artificial food colourings and sodium benzoate from the diet for one month.

After this period again review your child to see if there is an improvement.

Remember artificial food colourings have no nutritional value and often are used to make unhealthy foods look better.