

# ADHD & LIFESTYLE

## A VERDURA METHOD RESOURCE GUIDE

Verdura Method:  
Lifestyle Changes Before Medications  
Science, Mindfulness, and Behavior Change  
Working Together.



Verdura Method Resource Guides turn complex topics into plain language and gives you simple steps you can use today. Our aim is to equip you with the knowledge and tools to help you understand your body and make confident choices each day.

### QUESTIONS?

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## UNDERSTANDING THE ADHD BRAIN

### Here's what's actually happening:

People with ADHD often struggle with natural dopamine production. Dopamine is the "motivation and focus" neurotransmitter—it's what helps you pay attention, feel rewarded, and follow through on tasks.

When dopamine is low, your brain is constantly seeking stimulation to feel normal. That's why you might find yourself jumping between tasks, craving sugar, or struggling to focus on things that don't immediately excite you.

**The Good News:** Your brain can be trained to produce dopamine more naturally through lifestyle changes. It takes time and consistency, but it absolutely works. These habits literally rewire your brain for better focus and regulation.

**A Note on Medication:** Medications may be prescribed for ADHD, and that's a personal decision between you and your doctor. But here's what's important: lifestyle changes should be used no matter what. Whether you're on medication or not, these habits will support your brain and overall wellbeing. And if your doctor ever says you can wean off medication, sticking to this lifestyle schedule with food, exercise, sleep, fresh air, and stress reduction is essential. Never feel bad about medication, as your well-being is the utmost importance. The goal is simply to reduce or eliminate when and where is possible.

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## THE 6 PILLARS OF ADHD LIFESTYLE

This guide focuses on six key lifestyle pillars, which when approached holistically, can significantly impact ADHD symptoms and improve quality of life:

- **Nutrition:** Fueling your brain with the right foods.
- **Movement:** Using physical activity to boost focus and mood.
- **Sleep:** Prioritizing restful sleep for optimal brain function.
- **Fresh Air:** Harnessing the power of nature for calm and clarity.
- **Stress Reduction:** Managing stress to minimize its impact on ADHD.
- **Daily Habits:** Creating routines and systems for consistency and success.

<p><b>Nutrition</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Prioritize protein-rich foods.</li><li>• Incorporate healthy fats (omega-3s).</li><li>• Limit processed foods, sugar, and artificial additives.</li><li>• Stay hydrated throughout the day.</li><li>• Consider a balanced multivitamin.</li></ul>	<p><b>Movement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Aim for at least 30 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise most days of the week.</li><li>• Find activities you enjoy (dancing, hiking, swimming).</li><li>• Break up sedentary time with short movement breaks.</li><li>• Consider activities that require focus and coordination (yoga, martial arts).</li></ul>
<p><b>Sleep</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Establish a consistent sleep schedule.</li><li>• Create a relaxing bedtime routine.</li><li>• Optimize your sleep environment (dark, quiet, cool).</li><li>• Limit screen time before bed.</li><li>• Consider a sleep aid like magnesium or melatonin (consult your doctor).</li></ul>	<p><b>Fresh Air</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Spend time outdoors daily, even if it's just for a few minutes.</li><li>• Go for walks in nature.</li><li>• Open windows to improve indoor air quality.</li><li>• Consider indoor plants to purify the air.</li></ul>
<p><b>Stress Reduction</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Practice mindfulness and meditation.</li><li>• Engage in activities you find enjoyable and relaxing.</li><li>• Learn effective stress-management techniques.</li><li>• Prioritize social connections and support.</li><li>• Consider professional counseling or therapy.</li></ul>	<p><b>Daily Habits</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use a planner or calendar to schedule tasks and appointments.</li><li>• Break down large tasks into smaller, more manageable steps.</li><li>• Set realistic goals and expectations.</li><li>• Use timers to stay on track.</li><li>• Create a dedicated workspace.</li></ul>

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## NUTRITION FOR THE ADHD BRAIN

People with ADHD burn through fuel faster than others. Your brain is working overtime, which means you need consistent, quality nutrition to keep it running smoothly.

**Breakfast Is a Must:** Never skip it. Your brain needs fuel first thing in the morning to set the tone for focus all day. Include protein, fiber, and healthy fats.

**Fiber + Protein at Every Meal:** This combination keeps blood sugar stable and provides steady energy. Think eggs with veggies, chicken with lentils, or oatmeal with nuts.

**Eat Every 2-3 Hours:** Don't go too long between meals. When blood sugar drops, so does focus. Plan snacks between meals to keep your brain fueled.

**Lots of Vegetables:** Aim for vegetables at every meal. They provide essential nutrients, fiber, and help regulate blood sugar—all critical for focus.

**Stay Hydrated:** Dehydration directly impacts cognitive function. Drink water consistently throughout the day—aim for 2-3 liters.

### What to Avoid

These two things can make ADHD symptoms significantly worse:

**Sugar:** Causes blood sugar spikes and crashes, which wreck focus and energy. The quick dopamine hit feels good momentarily but leaves you worse off.

**Alcohol:** Disrupts sleep, depletes dopamine, and impairs focus the next day. Even moderate drinking can amplify ADHD symptoms significantly.

### A Note On Fresh Air

Time outside is key for the ADHD brain. Natural light helps regulate your circadian rhythm, and fresh air has a calming effect on the nervous system.

Even 15-20 minutes outside daily makes a difference.

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## EXERCISE: YOUR FOCUS SUPERPOWER

**Exercise is one of the most important things for ADHD. It's not optional—it's medicine. Movement naturally boosts dopamine, improves focus, reduces anxiety, and helps regulate emotions.**

The Target: 30-40 minutes, at least 5 times per week

Earlier in the day is better for focus, but any time works. Consistency is what matters most.

It Doesn't Have to Be Weights:

The best exercise is the one you'll actually do. Find something you enjoy and will stick with: Dancing, Hiking, Sports (basketball, tennis, soccer), Swimming, Cycling, Yoga or Pilates, Walking, Group fitness classes, Martial arts, Rock climbing

### Sleep Is Paramount

Poor sleep makes every ADHD symptom worse. It impairs focus, emotional regulation, impulse control, and decision-making. Quality sleep is non-negotiable.

#### Sleep Essentials:

- Aim for 7-9 hours consistently
- Keep a regular sleep/wake schedule (even weekends)
  - No screens 1 hour before bed
- Create a calming bedtime routine

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## STRESS REDUCTION & HOBBIES

### Stress Reduction

Make time daily for practices that calm your nervous system:

- Journaling
- Meditation (even 5-10 minutes)
- Breathwork

### The Power Of Hobbies

Having hobbies that genuinely interest and excite you is a big part of managing ADHD. When you're engaged in something you love, your brain naturally produces dopamine—without the crash that comes from unhealthy sources.

Find activities that light you up: art, music, building things, learning new skills, gaming, gardening, cooking—anything that keeps you curious and engaged. These aren't "extras"— they're essential for your wellbeing.

## YOUR ADHD SUPPORT CHECK LIST

### Daily Must-Dos:

- ✓ Eat breakfast with protein + fiber
- ✓ Eat every 2-3 hours (don't skip meals)
- ✓ Include vegetables at every meal
- ✓ Drink 2-3 liters of water
- ✓ Exercise 30-40 min (movement you enjoy)
- ✓ Get outside for fresh air
- ✓ Practice stress reduction (journal, breathe, meditate)
- ✓ Stick to a consistent sleep schedule
- ✓ Make time for hobbies that excite you

### Avoid:

- ✗ Skipping breakfast
- ✗ Going too long between meals
- ✗ Sugar and processed foods
- ✗ Alcohol
- ✗ Inconsistent sleep
- ✗ Being sedentary all day
- ✗ Ignoring stress buildup

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