

While stimulant medications remain the gold standard for treatment of ADHD, alternative options for those interested in seeking them out offer additional possibilities. Saffron has been prized and respected for centuries, but has only recently been thoroughly studied with the clinical rigor we would expect for any modern treatment.

Current research shows three key ways that Saffron is having an impact:

Similarities to Stimulants

- A randomized, controlled trial found saffron to be as effective as methylphenidate in reducing ADHD symptoms, notably with a more favorable side-effect profile.

Synergies with Low-dose Stimulants

- In adult studies, combining saffron with a low-dose stimulant outperformed a high-dose stimulant alone. This suggests saffron may help reduce overall medication requirements.

Support for Partial Responders

- For children who see some benefits from stimulants, but still experience gap symptoms, adding saffron produced significantly greater improvement than stimulant therapy alone.

A Note on the Research: Much of what we know comes from high-quality studies in Iran. While we look forward to more global data, the current evidence is a bright spot for families seeking alternatives.

Saffron's Support of the Development Brain

Saffron's true value lies in its multiple neurobiological effects. It doesn't do one thing. It does many things. Let's look at the multiple ways Saffron supports brain chemistry:

Monoamine Modulation

- This just means that saffron supports the availability of dopamine and norepinephrine, the key neurotransmitters available for focus and attention .

Glutamate and Gaba Balance

- Saffron influences the receptors that regulate the excitement and calming pathways to the brain.

Enzyme Inhibition

- Saffron may inhibit MAO and acetylcholinesterase, which supports mood, memory, and cognitive flexibility.



SAFFRON FOR PEDIATRIC ADHD: WHAT THE CLINICAL RESEARCH ACTUALLY SAYS

By: Dr. Elle O'Brien, DNP, PMHNP-BC

But is it safe!?

The key question, and ultimate arbiter for any parent evaluating an alternate therapy not only comes down to whether the therapy is effective, but, first, is the therapy safe? As parents we should be asking this question.

Saffron has demonstrated a strong safety profile. When side effects do occur, they are typically mild—such as slight appetite suppression or mild GI discomfort—and occur at lower rates than those seen with traditional stimulants.

Dosing: Finding the "Sweet Spot"

We don't guess, we follow the data. Dosing is typically based on weight to ensure it's effective yet gentle.

Typical Daily Dose

- Under 66 lbs (30 kg): 20 mg
- Over 66 lbs (30 kg): 30 mg

Choosing a safe, high-quality supplement is essential, as not all products are made equally. We are committed to helping you identify reputable, pediatric-appropriate options so you can make informed decisions.

Our Promise to You

At Mind-Body, we believe in the power of shared decision making. When considering saffron, there's much to consider. Including not just how saffron works, but how it aligns with your child's temperament, needs, and daily life. We discuss your goals in evaluating alternate therapies. Whether you want to improve school performance, smooth behaviors, or just decrease reliance on medication load. Whatever the case, we'll work with you to create a cohesive plan to integrate a total therapy plan into the life of your child, whether you decide to go with saffron or not.

