

Myth vs. Fact

At 2 a.m. the tape starts: the sugar, the screens, the year everything was chaos, the times you lost your temper. Underneath it, one sentence on a loop — **if I'd just been better, he would be too**. Here is the case against yourself, answered line by line. ADHD is one of the most heritable conditions in medicine. You didn't build this brain.

AS HERITABLE AS HEIGHT

How to use this page: stick it somewhere you'll see it — the fridge, the bedside drawer. The next time the tape starts running, read down the page instead. One fact is enough to interrupt it.

THE THREE THAT KEEP YOU UP

1 THE MYTH

"The sugar caused it."

the juice, the treats, the birthday cake.

THE FACT

In blinded studies — where nobody knew who got sugar — there was **no real effect on behaviour**. What changed was the parents: when they *thought* their child had sugar, they rated them as more hyperactive. The sugar was in the grown-ups' expectations, not the child.

2 THE MYTH

"The screens caused it."

the iPad, the games, the hours.

THE FACT

Screen time doesn't cause ADHD. Children with ADHD often use **more** screens because screens deliver the fast, immediate feedback their brains are hungry for. The screen use is a **sign** of the wiring, not the source of it.

3 THE MYTH

"He just needs firmer discipline."

if only you'd held the line.

THE FACT

If firmness cured ADHD, it wouldn't be one of the most heritable conditions in medicine — it'd just be a map of which parents were strict enough. **Plenty of consistent, loving, firm parents have ADHD children**. It was never about the discipline.

ALSO NOT GUILTY — STRUCK FROM THE LIST

~~the diet · working parents · that chaotic year · the divorce · vaccines · the early signs you're sure you missed.~~ None of these built your child's brain.

THE ONE THING THAT IS TRUE

ADHD is **wired in, not parented in**. Twin studies put the heritability around **70–80%** — the same neighbourhood as height. It runs in families, deeply, often through a parent who was never diagnosed. Your child was, in large part, born with this brain. And the wiring you feel guilty about handing on is very often the same engine under your own best days.

4 Where the guilt-energy goes instead — *a guilt-soaked parent is a tired one; he needs you steady*

☐ **Scaffolds** — the timers, lists, launch pads. The past you can't change; the structure you can build tonight.

☐ **Repair** — not never snapping; coming back. "That wasn't about you. We're okay."

☐ **Your own support** — your GP, a counsellor, other parents. Start the calls before the crisis.

☐ **— and, gently, you** — if you felt a jolt of recognition, you're allowed to follow it. Your pace.

THE MYTH ON THIS LIST I'VE CARRIED THE LONGEST

You did not do this to your child. You're doing something for him — every day, starting with putting the guilt down.

For information only — not a substitute for care from your own physician, or your child's. You already knew that.