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Ask the Naturopath: Helping Children Concentrate

Bless the children of the toxic generation! Especially bless the boys whose glandular make-up allows them to be more susceptible to the poisons of heavy metals from herbicides, pesticides, food coloring and a fast food nation. Not to say that girls are not being heavily affected; it just manifests differently for each and every one of us. It's fair to say that 70% of these beautiful children who come into Herbs etc, for help with concentration and focus concerns are boys.

Over the years, we've seen the most amazing and brilliant young people suffer from conditions that didn't exist or were not nearly so intense 30 years ago. This article is for all the amazing, beautiful children growing up in the sea of environmental poisons and helps them to swim to clearer waters.

We always start with the food! Here are two great examples. One boy, intelligent and kind-hearted, was helped by a fellow naturopath and instructor at the Naturopathic Institute: his problem: extreme violence. He would get into such a rage that his father would have to pin him to the floor until the rage would pass. He was a threat to others and to himself. The problem; High Fructose Corn Syrup! Every time he consumed it, his behavior went completely out of his own control. The naturopath helped the family to identify the problem. Corn syrup, especially high fructose corn syrup, causes behavioral problems and allergies in many children and adults.

He is in complete recovery; although avoiding High Fructose Corn Syrup is not easy, this young man knows it is worth it. If he accidentally consumes some while out with extended family or friends, he immediately feels the rage returning. He candidly discussed the guilt and remorse he felt from these episodes and how glad he is to be feeling normal.

For another boy, eight years old, the problem was once again the food. He had trouble sitting still in school, trouble concentrating, and would have fits of poor behavior. Using a non-invasive assessment tool called Muscle Response Testing, he was able to help me determine his food allergens without needles or scratch testing. He was very intolerant of wheat, dairy, peanuts, High Fructose Corn Syrup, and food colorings which can contain mercury and aluminum. These foods were removed, and the wheat was replaced with a similar but generally non-reactive grain called spelt; the milk was replaced with rice and almond milk (some cheeses and butter were allowed); and peanuts and peanut butter were replaced with almonds and almond butter. Within the first week, there were noticeable changes. By the end of one month, his teachers had reported amazing results, and his parents slowly removed his prescription behavioral medications.

Keep in mind that food is the first place to look. If you are not sure about a particular food, do the pulse test. Take the child's resting pulse rate (usually 60-80 beats per minute), then have them consume a suspected food. If the food is a problem, the pulse rate can rise between 10 to 30 beats per minute. Think about this: how would you feel if you ate a wheat product 3 times a day and it "wired" your entire body? Would you have trouble sitting still and concentrating? Would you behave a little differently? Now, avoid the foods that rev up the body. Further help can be obtained by seeing a naturopath to confirm your finding using Muscle Response Testing.

We additionally find these children and adults to be deficient in Essential Fatty Acids. Often, an 8-12-year-old may need up to 2 tablespoons per day of Flax Seed Oil, Super GLA, Borage oil, or other blends of these nerve soothing Essential Fatty Acids. We have had great success using vitamins that are known as antioxidants and herbs like Passion Flower, which is used for hyperactivity in Italy, Valerian which nourishes the nerves, and the mineral Magnesium in a liquid form which allows the body to relax and the nerves to be cooled.

Another great natural remedy is to use distilled flowers. Clematis is used for the absent-minded professor; Vine for the overly intense personality; Blackberry for the lack of interest in the present moment, and Madia for a lack of follow-through. Blends of the above are also made that can be sprayed under the tongue for easy use.

The point is that there is hope for anyone suffering from learning and behavioral problems. I don't believe drugs are the answer. It's time to empower people through education and nutrition. Let's learn what's really in processed food, which foods heal the body, and how to find and prepare the foods that bring about a generation of healthy children. Thank you to all of the children and their parents who have walked this path with us and are now full of all the wonderful things children should be full of confidence, happiness, and self-worth.