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Register

12 Tips for Getting Kids Started Toward Better Health

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After 30 years of practicing as a holistic pediatric registered nurse, I have watched as the number of children affected by the childhood epidemics of ADHD, Autism, Allergies, Asthma, Diabetes etc has reached staggering levels. The CDC tells us that 1 in 6 children in this country have either a behavioral, neurological or developmental condition. They also report 1 in 150 are diagnosed as autistic. Asthma has more than doubled since 1980 (and is now the leading chronic disease among American children.) I believe many of the physical, behavioral and developmental issues affecting our children (and causing so much heartache, suffering, emotional and financial drain on families) are preventable and recoverable with the use of sound nutrition and natural treatments. I have found that by implementing a few basic interventions initially, parents can help create a strong foundation of health for their children. *If after initiating these basic tips, symptoms persist; my suggestion is to seek out a clinician who is well versed in nutrition and the biomedical approach. Doing a proper assessment that takes into account the uniqueness of each child, ordering the proper tests from reputable labs and being able to interpret the results in the context of the child's condition are all essential skills the clinician must possess. Always start with the basics!*

1. Begin to decrease or eliminate unhealthy sugar laden or processed foods (candy, soda, foods with preservatives and colorings.)
2. Use instead, whole foods like: fresh fruit, vegetables, whole grain products (crackers, cereals, breads and pasta.) Many parents laugh when they hear this comment because their child is so picky they feel lucky to get them to eat at all! I find that when the frequently discovered low zinc level is addressed and we get some B vitamins on board, their pickiness greatly diminishes and they broaden their repertoire of foods.
3. Dilute all juices with water. Some juices have almost as much or more sugar per serving as soda.
4. Identify foods that your child may be allergic to. Work with a holistic practitioner to identify IgG as well as IgE food allergies. Check for peptides to gluten and casein. Once those foods are identified and removed, rotate the remaining foods as much as possible.
5. After decreasing your child's intake of allergenic and processed foods, begin to give him or her a good hypo-allergenic multi vitamin mineral supplement. Nutritionist's Choice can be made into a liquid at Hopewell Pharmacy 800-792-6670 1 tsp = 1 tablet. ASD Plex (powder) has been formulated specifically for the child with PDD or Autism. ASD Plex is produced by and can also be ordered from Hopewell Pharmacy. You will minimize most negative reactions by starting out with a very small amount. In the case of Nutritionist's Choice liquid, start with ¼ tsp and for a 50 lbs child work up to 1 ½ tps 2 x per day (always with food). For ASD PLEX begin with 1/8 tsp and very gradually work up to 1 rounded tsp 2 x per day (dose for a 50lb child). Always give the multis with food, divide into at least 2 doses and do not give past 4-5PM (the B vitamins can create make them feisty if given too late in the day).
6. The overuse of antibiotics and the associated complication of overgrowth of Candida, have been implicated as one of the many contributing factors in ADHD, allergies, weakened immunity and autism. In many instances, a viral or bacterial infection can be helped by the immune system enhancing herb: Echinacea. The liquid version seems to be most effective. The most effective way to use Echinacea is (at the very first sign of a sore throat or cold) start out with a small amount and gradually work up to 10 drops in a glass of juice every 4 hours. Gaia is a very pure brand. Do not give Echinacea to children who have a severe allergy to ragweed. Antibiotics are needed for strep or Lyme or if an infection persists.
7. If there is a history of recurrent ear or upper respiratory infections that required multiple courses of antibiotics, besides removing all dairy (which can be very mucus forming which creates a breeding ground for bacteria), investigate the possibility of yeast overgrowth in the intestines. Yeast toxins can have a definite impact on behavior, attention and the immune system's ability to respond appropriately.
8. Get a water filter or order reputable (glass) bottled water and make sure your child drinks plenty of water each day.
9. Make sure there is adequate fiber in your child's diet (whole grains, veggies, fruit, nuts, seeds etc.) Between the fiber and the water, your child should be having at least one good bowel movement per day. I do not agree with the advice some physicians give parents regarding bowel patterns. The human body was designed to eliminate toxins on a daily basis. If our colon gets backed up, the blood reabsorbs the toxins that are waiting to be eliminated thus negatively impacting many systems including the brain. Children should be having at least 1 good bowel movement per day. If fiber and water alone do not improve constipation, then try using either Smooth Move Tea by Traditional Medicinals or Herb-lax by Shaklee (does contain gluten, but good in these beginning stages).
10. Processed carbohydrates cause drastic fluctuations in blood sugar which can then affect attention, mood, behavior and energy. It is important to stabilize the blood sugar throughout the day by giving adequate (not excessive) amounts of protein (chicken, fish, turkey, eggs, red meat, soy or rice protein powders, nuts and seeds). Take the child's weight and multiply it by .8gms. This will = the amount of protein in grams needed per day. This should be divided into 3-4 servings with special emphasis at breakfast.
11. With the growing concern about the role that chemicals in the air, water, vaccines and food are playing in our physical and mental health, it makes perfect sense to begin moving towards a diet that contains organically grown produce and beef and chicken which are hormone and antibiotic free.
12. Eventually begin to replace your cleaning, laundry and personal care products with items that are biodegradable and non-toxic. Seventh Generation, Ecover and Shaklee are all good brands.

This can seem overwhelming if you try to do too much at once. Changing habits is difficult and changing the habits of children is even more challenging. Take one step at a time!

**Does your child suffer from ADHD, Allergies,
 Asthma, Autism, Obesity, etc.? COME TO SOKHOP!!!**