

Behavioral Disorders in Children - A Note on Environmental Exposure From Toxic Foods and Toxic Metals

Attention deficit (hyperactivity) disorder (ADD/ADHD), Autism and other neurological behavioral disorders are on the rise. Case in point: In 1950, only a few thousand children were prescribed stimulant medications to treat ADD/ADHD. Today, over 4 million children are taking them. Some research claims that ADD/ADHD affects between 6-20% of children ages 6-12.¹ In the United States, an 805% cumulative growth rate increase was recorded for autism between 1992 and 2003.² The bottom line: The prevalence of behavioral neurological disorders among children is growing at a faster pace than population growth. This means that environment must be playing a major contributory role.³

Toxic Foods:

What has changed in the last fifty years to cause the number of treated cases of ADD/ADHD to increase over 2000 times? One answer stands out dramatically - DIET. There have been more changes to the average American diet in the last fifty years than in the last 5,000. Some examples include food processing technologies, chemical additives and preservatives, artificial colors, flavors, and sweeteners, hydrogenated fats, and more. All of the above have been shown to negatively affect the chemistry of the brain. Consumption of food colorings in the US alone totals more than 100 million pounds per year. In the past 30 years, soda consumption in children has increased by nearly 300%. Depending on age, the consumption of fast food comprises 25-40% of meals for children. There are an infinite

number of parties, social engagements, school functions and fundraisers, etc. that promote the sale and consumption of foods which have little to no nutritional value. Many parents ignorantly claim that kids are "young enough to burn it off." So what does all of this have to do with neurological and behavioral disorders? A number of medical research studies have directly linked highly processed foods and food additives to ADD/ADHD and the autistic spectrum disorders. Lower intelligence, lower grades, increased discipline problems, and chemical imbalances in the brain have all been linked to poor diet choices.^{4,5,6,7} You are what you eat.

Toxic Metals:

Aluminum, Mercury, Lead, Nickel, Cadmium, Beryllium, and Arsenic are all toxic metals. They can be found in cookware, beverage cans, anti-perspirants, processed foods, vaccines and other medications, air pollution, plastics, pesticides, table salt, cigarette smoke, tap water, dental amalgams, fabric softener and much more. At high enough concentrations, these metals can cause a host of different symptoms and diseases. Many of them are known to create inflammation in the brain and spinal cord leading to multiple neurological side effects.

Recently, a lot of press has focused in on the link between vaccinations and autistic spectrum disorders. Since 1983, the number of vaccines recommended for our children by the Center for Disease Control has more than tripled. This time frame coincides with the 800% increase in autism diagnoses. Evidence points to thime-

risol (a mercury containing preservative) used in MMR vaccines and flu shots. An independent evaluation of a large study as part of the Centers for Disease Control Vaccine Safety Datalink concluded that children exposed to 3 thimerisol containing vaccines were 27 times more likely to develop autism than children who were not exposed. Many experts deny the relationship between mercury and autism, however, there is a large body of scientific medical evidence that supports the link.^{8,9,10} It is beyond the scope and not the purpose of this article to discuss all of the controversial vaccine issues, but you should be aware that mercury exposure poses a very serious health threat.

Consider this foundational thought. Your health is dramatically influenced by your environment. A large part of your environment consists of what you put into your body (i.e. food, medication, vaccines, pollution, etc). Our children depend on us as parents to teach them through dialogue but more importantly through our own actions about the proper care of the human body. If we fail as parents to preserve the future health of our children, then our children will follow and fail in our footsteps.

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