



Crow River
Animal Hospital
& Dental Clinic

Friday Fun Facts – Number 23:2010

Melissa Shelton DVM – Behavior and Diet I ADD and More...

Disclaimer: All of the information provided here is intended for educational purposes. The information is not intended to diagnose, treat, or prescribe for any illness. Please seek the advice of a qualified health care professional in your area of concern if you or your pets have a health challenge.

When my son was just a little baby, we noticed what we were told were “normal” baby skin issues. “Classic” cradle cap, baby eczema, and baby acne were conditions described by everyone who saw our son. However, when our son got to the age where he could actually scratch his head with his own hands, this chapter in our life took a drastic change. No longer were we dealing with skin that just looked bad. We would be up all night with a little baby, who would scratch his head until it was bloody. We would have him wear mittens, hats – you name it – trying to keep him from destroying his delicate skin. It was terribly stressful, resulting in many sleepless nights and tears.

As a veterinarian – I knew that this was NOT normal. I was never really comfortable with him having the other “normal” skin conditions either, as it didn’t really make sense to me to have a fresh perfect new baby, have skin problems. With our new found horror of his itching, I had to find answers. We went to pediatricians, allergy specialists, naturopaths, homeopaths, chiropractors, kinesiologists, shamans, and Reiki Masters – I wanted to find someone with an answer – but alas, no one did.

I started to look at the situation as I would for a dog. I had started to notice a direct correlation with breast feeding and the itching. However, I was assured that he had tested negative for all food allergies by the traditional allergist, and even the kinesiologist could not find a correlation with diet and the reaction. So, I did what I would do for any pet in my hospital – A DIET TRIAL. Since he was breast feeding, it was a diet trial for me. My diet consisted of eating only plain chicken and water for 2 weeks. And, low and behold, my son was normal. I had my answer. He was definitely reacting to something I was eating, and it was passing through my breast milk and causing an allergic reaction in him.

Next was to introduce foods one at a time, and see where the reaction would rear its ugly head. I kept a very exact diet log, documenting everything I ate or drank, what time I ate or drank it, and when our son was breast fed, and if he had a reaction. After a while, it became incredibly confusing to figure out which

items were causing the problem. He would react to yogurt, but not to milk. He would react if I had ketchup on a hamburger patty, but not to chili with hamburger and tomatoes. He even seemed to react to me having a Sprite!! Every time I thought I found an answer – dairy, tomatoes, beef, citrus... - something else would prove that to be wrong. I didn't give up though. I had 2 weeks of diet logs and poured over them to find the answer.

Thankfully, a friend of mine came over and was telling me of her “disgust of Corn Syrup”. It was in all foods, was certainly causing health problems, and it was almost impossible to buy anything that didn't contain it. LIGHT BULB!!! I grabbed my diet log – and guess what. Corn Syrup was in every item that my son reacted to. Yogurt sweetened with corn syrup, white bread sweetened with corn syrup, ketchup sweetened with corn syrup!!! However, I was assured by multiple MD's that there was no way that a baby could react to corn syrup, and especially not through the mother's breast milk! EXCUSE ME – tell that to my 4 month old son, scratching his face and head until it bled!!

Corn syrup is almost in every commercial food item today. Bread, soda, popsicles and freezies, ice cream, yogurt, fruit snacks, canned fruits, ketchup, hot chocolate mix, crackers, graham crackers, cereals, chocolate milk, tomato soup, hot dogs, lunch meat; the list goes on and on.

So what does this have to do with Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD), Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD), Tourette's syndrome, Asperger's, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD), Anxiety disorders, Autism, Pediatric Autoimmune Neuropsychiatric Disorders Associated with Streptococcal Infections (PANDA's), and multiple other behavioral and neurologic issues? Well, let me tell you! We had drastically changed our whole family's diet for our son. We read labels like crazy, and only bought wholesome foods that did not contain corn syrup, high fructose corn syrup, corn syrup solids or anything else related to corn syrup. We saw amazing changes, and my son was normal again. We hadn't realized that he was also having quite a bit of digestive problems until we changed everything as well. Poor little guy was miserable before.

However, as we changed all of this – we noted something else. My husband who has Tourette's syndrome, and my 4 year old daughter who appeared to have the beginning symptoms of Tourette's with a splash of ADD/ADHD and OCD– improved drastically in THEIR symptoms. And, more importantly, we found another amazing correlation – that when we would have a “dietary break” – and they would eat something with corn syrup or chemicals in it – their symptoms would escalate, usually 24 hours after eating the offending ingredient.

Of course, once you clean up your diet – it becomes easier and easier to recognize items that cause you problems. With what I have found in our family – it has encouraged me to teach others what diet can do for their concerns. As more and more people eliminate corn syrup, food dyes, artificial sweeteners, preservatives, MSG, and other food chemicals – the results are amazing. Children that had their diets changed did not need medications or needed much less of them. Adults found that they were having much less skin problems, such

as eczema. Children's behavior in general (even in children that didn't have behavioral challenges) – seemed much more easy going and pleasant.

Over and over again, there were significant improvements for children and adults, when corn syrup and chemicals were removed from the diet. If you can't pronounce what is on a food label – DO NOT EAT IT! Just read a bag of Doritos sometime! They are so loaded with chemicals and things you can't pronounce, it is scary.

The most common things that people tend to forget about in diet changes are: chewing gum, candy, ketchup, condiments, school lunches, chocolate milk, fruit juices, canned fruits, breads, and restaurants. We actually bring our own organic ketchup to restaurants. Not always easy or fun, but since kids love ketchup – it is far easier than living with the consequences of the behavioral changes after eating it!

I am not saying that diet change alone will correct all problems for a child. My daughter still exhibits some tic's and OCD type behaviors, most commonly when she is stressed. However, when she has a dietary "break" – her symptoms can be so profound – it makes you realize that we are not being "nice" to allow her to have a bowl of Frosted Flakes – just because she wants some.

Start reading labels and pay attention to what you are putting into yourself and your family. Strive to get out of a box, and back into the kitchen. Using real ingredients like eggs, carrots, buttermilk, whole wheat flour... It sounds like a lot of work, but if something as stupid as corn syrup can make my daughter exhibit neurologic behaviors – what is it doing to all of us day after day after day. What problems are we going to see over time with everyone consuming dead and preserved foods – that can sit on a grocery store shelf for 8 months without spoiling? Is the increase in Diabetes, Alzheimer's, Cancer, and ADD all related to our poor American Diets? Convenience foods are not so convenient when you are sick or dying from them.

Be sure to watch for future FFF's – that will discuss whole food supplements and essential oils that are extremely helpful for all of the conditions discussed in this article. However, unless you eliminate the main things that cause your problems – all of the essential oils and supplements in the world are not going to correct the issue. It is like bailing out a leaking boat. You want to fix the leak first, and then bail out the water. Although most people will see improvement when using essential oils with ADD and other problems, without correcting the diet you will be fighting a losing battle.

"Mother Nature gave us the gift of healing. Providing our bodies with the nutrients, substances, and care required to heal, lies in our own actions."

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