

In this month's newsletter:

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Quote for October:

“If your doctor consistently prescribes medication without suggesting lifestyle changes, then I have one piece of advice. Find another doctor”. Cyndi O’Meara

The Dangers of Medicating ADD and ADHD Children

There has been a lot of controversy in the last couple of weeks about the indiscriminate use of medications after the diagnosis of ADD and ADHD. I have never agreed with this practice and have always maintained that a change in diet and lifestyle choices for the child should be the first option.

It is a fact that all medications merely mask a problem, pain or illness; they rarely solve the problem. This was brought home to me even more this week when one of the horses at our local pony club was diagnosed with colic. The vet came and gave the horse a couple of injections. The horse then stopped displaying symptoms of colic so the usual practice of treating colic, keeping the horse walking, was not followed. The next morning when we arrived at pony club, the horse was dead. **When you take away the symptoms through the use of medications, sometimes there are dire consequences.**

Back to the topic at hand. ADD and ADHD. The latest research shows that there is little evidence that drugs used to treat these disorders (mainly Ritalin and Dexamphetamine) are effective or even safe, says a study just completed by the Oregon State University Drug Effectiveness Review Project.

ADHD is the most commonly diagnosed psychiatric condition among school-aged children. Controversy surrounds the condition because most children will, at some time, experience the symptoms of ADHD which include lack of concentration, hyperactivity and impulsiveness. Too often doctors are prescribing medication instead of finding out what’s happening with the child, their diet and why they are exhibiting these behaviours. It would be more appropriate to match the treatment to the cause instead of assuming there is just one treatment (medication).

60,000 children in Australia are taking medication for ADHD. Prescriptions for Dexamphetamine have skyrocketed during the past decade from 46,000 prescriptions in 1994 to about 246,000 last year. Both Ritalin and Dexamphetamine are now listed on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme, reducing the cost of the drug from \$49.00 to \$21.00 and \$4.60 for welfare

recipients. This is making the drug even more accessible – and in my opinion, this is not a good thing.

To top off what I've already said, the Australian Government produced a publication in 2000 called *Our Strongest Defence against the Drug Problem* to teach parents about street drugs and their consequences. One page is devoted to each type of drug and the specific drugs in that category.

One of the categories is Stimulants and two of the street drugs are Ritalin and Dexamphetamine. Some of the possible side effects are insomnia, dry mouth, sweating, paranoia, and death.

Most children who are on the medications for ADHD will also be on sleeping tablets and other drugs to counteract the side effects of the initial medication.

If you have a child or know a child on medication for ADHD, then perhaps it would be prudent to contact a support group such as the Drug Free Attention Deficit Support Group in WA, to at least look at other options.

A change in diet can be a powerful antidote to bad behaviour. Many foods and additives sensitise the brain and nervous system making it very hard for a child or adult to sit still or have normal brain activity. My book ***Changing Habits Changing Lives*** available from www.changinghabits.com.au sorts through these foods and additives in order to help you calm a body and mind. This is just a start; other support groups will help with family and school issues that may also be contributing to the disorder.

Recipe of the Month

Chargrilled Salmon on Sweet Potato

4 cutlets of fresh salmon

Sea Salt

2 large red sweet potatoes

1 red onion, peeled and sliced

1/2 yellow pepper, deseeded and sliced

1/2 red pepper, deseeded and sliced

1/2 green pepper, deseeded and sliced

Butter

1. Peel the sweet potato, chop into pieces, place in filtered water, bring to the boil and simmer until potato is soft. Drain. Add 1 Tbs butter and mash.

2. In a fry pan melt 1 Tbs butter, add 1 tsp Rapadura sugar or organic raw sugar and mix; add onion and peppers and cook until vegetables are limp.

3. Heat an iron skillet (BBQ is best), place the salmon on the hot skillet, grind some sea salt onto the top, cook for approx 5 minutes then turn the salmon once; cook for a further 2 minutes.

4. Put the sweet potato on a plate and spread it out. Place the cooked salmon on the sweet potato bed then top with the onion and pepper mix. Serve with salad.

Movie of the Month

The Five People You Meet in Heaven

This movie is based on a book written by Mitch Albom who also wrote the best selling book *Tuesdays with Morrie*. It begins where most stories end. When a lonely and elderly man dies in an accident, he awakens in an unfamiliar place called Heaven where 5 people, some strangers, some loved ones, take him on an illuminating journey through his life. The movie explores the unexpected mysteries of the after-life by reminding us what really matters here on earth. I loved this movie because it portrays a man who felt he had done nothing with his life but in reality he had touched many people's lives.

I don't especially enjoy TV but I do like a good movie, and the movies I enjoy most are those that teach me something, so any movie I recommend has a moral, lesson or understanding. Enjoy.

Happy Changing Habits

Cyndi O'Meara

www.changinghabits.com.au