

Why Feeding Your Pediatric Nutrition Component is Vital

By Rich Smith

Chiropractors learn early that nutrition is an essential component of health, especially where children are concerned. Unfortunately, a truly strategic focus on pediatric nutrition is often missing from practice, experts contend.

Experts agree that properly nourished kids tend to have better chiropractic outcomes. “Good nutrition is foundational – when a patient has it, our adjustments hold more effectively,” says Christy Russell-Shae, DC, founder of Simply Vibrant in Rockville Centre, N.Y.

Conversely, when a patient is nutritionally compromised, disorders hold sway instead. “The four most common problems I see in the children I work with are autism, allergies, ADHD and asthma,” Russell-Shae tabulates. “In each instance, poor nutrition figures prominently.”

To this list of conditions, James Denito, DC, of Denito Chiropractic Clinic PC in Allen, Texas, adds allergies, skin problems, and hormonal imbalances, “such as estrogen dominance – a cause of feminization in boys and premature menstruation in girls. Also digestive issues, including gallbladder problems, gastritis, ulcers, and parasites.”

At the root of all is a body lacking in vitamins, minerals, essential amino acids and other health-promoting natural compounds.

Starting Point

In addition to helping young patients achieve superior outcomes, attention to nutrition helps your practice raise its satisfaction scores, which in turn opens the door to more patient retention and referrals. Thus, the reasons to make pediatric nutrition a more central part of your practice seems compelling.

A good starting point is with the addition of diagnostic technology. “I have the means of testing my pediatric patients in-office so that I can more completely understand the nature of their nutritional problems and identify whatever it is that’s overwhelming their body,” says Russell-Shae, who uses a limbic stress assessment system from ZYTO Corp., an Orem, Utah-based maker of bioscanners.

Nutrition in a Bottle

Many chiropractors find it advantageous to establish dispensing programs for the vitamins and supplements they believe their young patients should begin taking in order to restore or – as sadly may be the case – create nutritional integrity for the first time.

The problem, however, is that there are so many dietary offerings on the market now that it can be a challenge to find high-quality products that are “free of fillers, binders, magnesium stearate, titanium dioxide, cytotoxic MSG’s and other ingredients that contribute nothing to positive body functioning,” says Russell-Shae.

Another problem is that children under the age of 10 have difficulties when trying to swallow vitamins and supplements in pill or capsule form. Denito detours that issue by providing liquid nutrition products, such as intraKID™ which is created and manufactured by Drucker Labs of Plano, Texas.

Alan Sherr, DC, is likewise a proponent of liquid nutrition products on grounds that they are simple, have better bioavailability, and are more attuned with the child’s best interests. “Liquid products are also more global in nature,” says Sherr, director of the Northport Wellness

Center in Northport, N.Y. “As such, they’re designed not only to heal a leaky gut, but also to simultaneously enhance the body’s overall health and nutrition, thus enabling us to address other issues.”

Teachable Moments

A third ingredient needed to make pediatric nutrition a more prominent part of your practice is education.

“I am a firm believer that the apple never falls far from the tree, which is why most parents and their children share similar nutrition habits and have the same types of resistance to changing those habits,” says Sherr. “It’s for that reason that we invite parents to become better educated on their own nutrition as well as on the nutrition of their child, encouraging them to take on a new, healthier regime. We believe by educating the parent that we are also educating and helping the child to achieve better nutritional habits.”

Denito advocates use of proprioception training as part of the education process. “This can help change kids’ behaviors when it comes to better nutrition choices,” he says. “One technique involves putting my young patients on a mini-trampoline and instructing them to bounce while I lead them in a game of ‘Simon says.’ The movements involved in this kind of activity help modify the way their brain processes information, making them more capable of listening to and complying with instructions from parents and being better able to restrain impulsive behaviors.”

Inducer of Big Change

Helpful resources for learning more about pediatric nutrition include the International Chiropractic Pediatric Association (<http://www.icpa4kids.com>) and the Holistic Pediatric Association (<http://www.hpakids.org>). Denito recommends tapping into these resources and others before undertaking a serious shift toward pediatric nutrition.

Once the shift is made, prepare to be amazed, experts advise. For instance, Russell-Shae says her own practice has been wholly transformed by pediatric nutrition. “It has, for the most part, taken over,” she divulges. “Only about 5 percent of what I do now is traditional chiropractic and body work – services I now mainly refer to colleagues in the area.”

Still, even if such a radical remake of one’s practice is undesired, chiropractors can and should do more to emphasize pediatric nutrition in their day-to-day practices. “At least 50 percent of our cases show remarkable improvement when parents fully embrace a healthier nutritional regime,” says Sherr.

Denito concurs. “Everything from behavioral labels to seizures is ameliorated once the patient is on a solid nutritional footing,” he says. “And, by addressing nutrition, problems in the spine and overall health problems tend not to recur. Best of all, pediatric nutritional health improves the quality of life for the entire household by greatly reducing or eliminating a serious source of stress and strain on the family unit – in other words, helping the child helps everyone.”

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