

Family Wellness First

Kids Out of Balance

What Does It Mean to Be Truly Healthy?

Before we explore ways that we can keep our kids in balance we need to consider what it means to be truly healthy and “in balance.” Many of us are socialized into not considering our health until symptoms appear. We believe, “If I feel well, I must be healthy; if I feel sick, I must be unwell.” We lead such demanding lives that when a headache, cold or backache arises we opt for the quickest and easiest remedy: drugs. While there is always a place for drugs and surgery, our “there’s a pill for every ill” mantra doesn’t address why we are experiencing the symptoms in the first place.

Ask yourself: If a person in pain takes a pill and the pain then goes away, does this mean he or she is healthy again? Of course not. Symptoms are a message from our body that there is a problem and that change is needed. A true indicator of health is when the body is able to effectively adapt to the stressors placed on it.

So many children today are super-sized, chronically unwell, depressed or unable to concentrate. Indeed, our youth are not coping with the stressors of the modern world. It’s important we explore ways to help them be healthier, more resilient and empowered for a brighter future.

This begins with asking good questions. As a parent, we can usually sense when something is not quite right with our child. If this is your hunch, then it’s important you ask: Why is my child chronically unwell? Why is he constipated? Or why can’t she concentrate?

We can look to nature for inspiration. Take a moment to imagine the approach biologists might take if a certain region of a rainforest died. Would they simply remove the dead trees and replant vegetation? Or would they investigate what had caused the destruction? If all the fish in a particular lake were found to be dying or have



deformities, would biologists and wildlife experts simply prescribe medication for the fish? No, that would be illogical. They would examine what caused the imbalance in the environment. They would look at the ecosystem and consider all the factors that sickened the fish, and then set about eradicating these factors and implementing strategies to recreate homeostasis or balance.

Now imagine a child who behaves aggressively. How would health experts tackle this problem? Is it logical to offer him medication for behavioral issues, or do we serve this child better by investigating the foods he is eating and his hydration levels, considering whether he is over-stimulated by electronic gadgets and computers, and assessing his nervous system and communication between the gut and the brain?

The human body is remarkable, and when it is functioning and coordinating itself well it has the capacity to heal and regenerate. If we can teach our children that health comes from within and that their bodies have tremendous intelligence and capacity to ward off illness, then early warning signs like a runny nose or a sore throat will not be seen as a signal to take antibiotics, but rather as an indication that they need to slow down, get lots of rest and boost their immunity with natural foods. Drugs are not always the answer. There are safe and effective approaches and holistic health practitioners who can empower us to navigate our family’s health outcomes.

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Signs of a Body out of Balance

As parents it is important that we observe our children to see that they are integrating their world in an age appropriate manner. An imbalance can be indicated in a variety of ways. A baby, for example, may cry or fuss during feeding and arch her back. Her head may be an uneven shape, or she might not like lying on her tummy. Becoming familiar with the expected developmental milestones will help you assess whether your baby or child's behavior is problematic or not. (For further information, please refer to my book *Ticklish: New Ways to Help Your Child Learn, Love & Play* at ticklishbook.com.)

For older children, some warning signs of a body out of balance may be:

- Slow recovery from minor illnesses, and recurring colds, flus and allergies
- Poor balance and coordination
- Inability to concentrate

- Agitation, anxiety
- Oversensitivity to environmental noises
- Eczema, pale skin, discoloration under their eyes
- A bloated tummy, constipation
- Hyperactivity
- Defiant or angry behavior
- Consistently low mood, lack of enthusiasm for life
- Difficulty sleeping
- Fatigue upon waking, general sluggishness

Visit your ICPA chiropractor today to have your child examined for imbalances.

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Modified excerpt from: *Kids Out of Balance* by Jennifer Barham-Floreani, B.App.Clin.Sci, B.Chiropractic. Read more in *Pathways*: www.pathwaystofamilywellness.org

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