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What is Biomedical Treatment?

By Beth Vataker
Board Member

In the fall of 2005, I started a biomedical support group through the Autism Society of America, Broward Chapter. I have been implementing biomedical treatment with my son for the past year. It has been a long process to research all of this information, understand it, and then to implement it. I hope that some parents will find this brief overview helpful in trying to understand the basics of biomedical treatment.

I must first confess that I am a Registered Nurse who had firm belief in traditional medicine and would have never considered what many are calling biomedical treatment options for their children with autism. That is until I took a real close look at what exactly biomedical treatments are.

In my beginning months of dealing with autism I knew we needed to get going with the widely advertised ABA program, and for the first six months this is what consumed me day and night. When I felt comfortable with our program I started to re-read some of the literature that I had come across previously on the Gluten Free Casein Free diet (GFCF). This was something that kept coming up in numerous books.

Placing my son on such a restricted diet seemed to be so time consuming. I had to wonder if it would even work. How was I going to ever begin to understand this diet? Learning to cook these special foods seemed unimaginable for someone who lives on take out. Others before me have taken the plunge, maybe it could be done. The biggest question to myself was, "what if it actually worked? Then wouldn't I be depriving my son of a brighter future?" So there was my answer. I would not allow my ignorance of this diet decide my son's future. I would learn as much as I could and begin the diet one step at a time.

Immediately upon removing casein, our son began to sleep through the night. No night time screaming bouts with colic, no more diarrhea, no more mylicon drops each night before bed. If the diet could help so much what else could I be missing? Could it be that this group of DAN! doctors were actually on to something? A DAN! doctor is one who follows the Defeat Autism Now protocol that was produced in 1995 through the Autism Research Institute.

After reading up on biomedical treatment options I realized this form of treatment was actually related to the biochemistry of one's body! Wow! How did I miss this one for the past six months? It was time for us to contact a DAN! doctor to begin the testing.

We chose Dr. Berger who at the time was down in Miami. He recently relocated his practice to Tampa, but thankfully comes back to South Florida every 2 months. It is he who has helped me understand why we use the supplements that we use. He has never shunned any question that I have. Every visit has ended with me fully understanding which supplements we are using and how they work.

So what is biomedical treatment? In simplest terms, it is the identifying of certain biochemical imbalances that when corrected allows the body to function better. If there are certain nutrients missing they are supplemented. If there are toxins present they are removed. In my son we have identified certain foods that seem to affect him in a negative way such as wheat, dairy, soy, food colorings, flavorings, additives, and fruit. My son takes supplements such as vitamins, minerals, and essential fatty acids. It all sounds so simple but in reality it is not.

Methionine is an amino acid that primarily comes from protein in our diet. It is responsible for two important components of our bodies: methyl and sulfur. It is methylation and sulfation that many of the supplements that we use are targeted at helping to repair.

One of the major functions of a properly working methylation pathway is to rid our bodies of toxins. When this pathway is not functioning properly, the toxins can damage organs and oxidative damage can happen. I learned through our DAN! doctor that we could actually

Please visit our web site for a complete list of support groups that are available to the general public:

www.asabroward.org

Schaefer Consultants Behavior Therapy

Lynn Schaefer, Ph.D.

11718 NW 12 Street
Pembroke Pines
Florida 33026

Office: 954-443-8152
Fax: 954-441-7166

The NAAR WALK is Almost Here!

Mark your calendars!

The 5th Broward County "Walk F.A.R. NAAR" is set for:

Saturday, April 22nd @ Nova Southeastern University
Registration is @ 9am
The walk begins @ 10am

You don't actually have to do the 1.5 mile walk to enjoy all the fun. There will be entertainment, activities for the kids and food for the entire family. Join the more than 35 teams that have signed up to raise money for Autism research.

Also, in case you haven't heard, NAAR and Autism Speaks have merged.

To find out more, go to:
www.autismwalk.org

Do you have an article you would like to submit to the Broward ASA newsletter? (like the one below)

Send it to:
ErinRodriguez@earthlink.net

Thanks!

What is Biomedical Treatment?...

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test this pathway to see if it was damaged in my son. The results showed that the metabolites of the methylation pathway were found to be deficient. Fortunately, there are certain specific nutrients such as methylcobalamin (a form of vitamin B-12) and folinic acid (a form of folate) which can stimulate the detoxification pathway to work better.

What about the oxidative stress? What about the toxins that are already embedded in the body? The easiest way for me to answer these questions comes quoted from Dr. Berger's explanation to me. He stated that, " There is a catch-22, in that toxins such as heavy metals build up due to the detoxification pathway not working, but these toxins can also further poison the detoxification pathway. It is this reason why it is essential to test for and treat heavy metal toxicity (through a process called chelation). Often when the toxins are removed from the body, the pathways work better on their own so less supplements may be needed."

Chelation therapy has been in the autism community for over 5 years. The Autism Research Institute has taken parental ratings of successes with different supplements and drugs used for children with autism. After understanding biomedical treatments a little bit more it should come as no surprise to you that parents reported 73% of the children got better (25% showed no effect, and 2% got worse.) An overall better to worse ratio of 34:1.

The above explanation of biomedical treatments is a very brief overview. I can assure you that it is much more detailed than I can explain in one brief article. If your head is spinning with questions, and has you wondering, " Am I missing something here?" Then you are where I was a year ago.

The best advice I can give you is pursue the answers to your questions.

It is my hope that one day all parents with children afflicted with autism will be told what it is biomedically that they can do for their children upon diagnosis along with the many other therapy options that they are given. It is hard to believe that maintain-

Maybe one day they will catch up to the rest of us.

For now I have chosen to bring about awareness of biomedical treatments to the autism community. Who knows what next year could bring?

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TO FIND OUT MORE...

For further information regarding chelation therapy, you can go to www.wholisticpeds.com and click on "Individualized Approaches to Treating Chronic Disorders."

To find out more about the DAN! Protocol, go to:
www.autismwebsite.com

And to get involved in the Autism Society of America, Broward Chapter, Biomedical Support group, email me at BethVataker@aol.com

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The opinions expressed in this article are solely the author's. All treatments mentioned are for informational purposes only and are not endorsed by the Autism Society of America.

Thank You!

A special "thank you" goes out to GRACA for meeting each month to assemble and label newsletters for distribution.

WE WOULD ALSO LIKE TO THANK THE ADULTS FROM THE ARC ADULT TRAINING PROGRAM for volunteering their time and effort as well. Your tireless contribution is greatly appreciated!

ASA Broward especially thanks chapter member Denise Karp for maintaining a free informational list serve for all persons interested in Autism. IT'S YOUR #1 SOURCE FOR AUTISM RELATED INFO IN SOUTH FLORIDA. E-mail Denise at deniseslist@yahoo.com to subscribe.

Recreational Activities

The Broward Autism Foundation is pleased to be able to offer for chapter members partial scholarships for selectively sponsored recreational programs. Please contact the following for additional information:

Tag Gymnastics: Alicia Murphy (954) 943-8659

Project Stable Horseback Riding: Eileen Roth (954) 474-5333

Volunteers

Volunteers are needed for assisting in set up and clean up duties for our monthly meetings. Please contact our Hospitality Chairperson, Judi Steinberg at (954) 577-4141 if interested.

Support Groups

SPEC (Support for Parents of Exceptional Children)
Meetings are held the first Wednesday of every month (7pm) at the Dan Marino Center in Weston, Florida. For more details, please contact (954) 577-4141.

GRACA (Grandparents and relatives of Autistic Children and Adults)
Please contact Roz Bellman for meeting dates and times at (954) 720-5683.

CARD (Center for Autism and Related Disabilities)
Please contact the CARD center directly at (800) 9-AUTISM and register to be on their mailing list. CARD hosts many informative workshops and conferences throughout the year.

ACE (Autism Committee for ESE)
This school advisory meeting is held the third Wednesday of each month (9:00a.m.) at the Baudhuin Preschool at Nova Southeastern University in Davie. Call Stacey Hoaglund for more details at (954) 252-8764.

South Florida Fragile X Resource Group
Please contact Randy Green for meeting dates and times at (954) 433-5413.

Adult Transition Group
Please contact Eileen Roth for meeting dates and times at (954) 474-5333.

Fundraising

The Broward Chapter of the Autism Society has a variety of NEW gift items available to help in our fundraising efforts:

Autism Car Magnets ----------$5 each
NEW logo EMBROIDERED T-shirts----------$12 each
NEW Autism Remembrance "Brie" Bears----------$10 each
Puzzle pins----------$10 each
Angel cards (Qty 10)----------$16 pack

Also, don't forget that donation cards are available for "In Memory Of" and "In Honor Of".
All gift items can be purchased at the monthly chapter meetings or by calling the ASA office @ (954)577-4141.

Advertisements

ADVERTISE WITH US---our newsletter is circulated to over 350 people, families and/or professionals throughout the community. Advertising space is available as follows:

business card size--------$25
¼ page----------$50
½ page----------$75
full page----------$150

Membership

Please check your address label for expiration date. If applicable, please send your membership dues to our PO Box address. Don't forget to make any necessary changes.

Thank you for your support!

Due to budget constraints, we will not be able to send you a newsletter if your dues are not current.

Join ASA

Membership—ASA Broward Chapter (Please Print) This amount includes local, state and national dues

Individual __ $50.00 Family __ $60.00 Full-time Student __ $35.00 (copy of current registration as evidence of full-time status)

Name _____ Spouse's Name _____

Address _____ City_____ State _____ Zip _____

Home Phone _____ Work _____ Fax _____ E-mail _____

Parent __ Professional __ Occupation _____ F/T Student __ Location _____

Relative __ or Friend __ of: Child's Name _____

Residence: Home __ Group Home _____ Other _____

School, Job or Workshop Name _____ Grade _____

Are you willing to be part of our referral and Information Network? (yes/no) _____ On a committee (yes/no) _____

Do you give ASA Broward Chapter permission to put your name on the U of M CARD Center mailing list (yes/no) ____

Other comments or suggestions? _____

_____

Please send your check made payable to Broward Chapter / Autism Society. PO Box 450476, Sunrise, Florida 33345

Public Notice: The Broward Autism Foundation and the Autism Society are publicly supported organizations under the IRS Section 501(c)(3). A copy of the exemption, determination letter and tax returns are available for public inspection at our home office with advance notice.

BROWARD AUTISM FOUNDATION AND PURSUANT TO CHAPTER 496, FL STATUTES "A COPY OF THE OFFICIAL REGISTRATION AND FINANCIAL INFORMATION MAY BE OBTAINED FROM THE DIVISION OF CONSUMER SERVICES, BY CALLING TOLL-FREE WITHIN THE STATE 1-800-HELP FLA. REGISTRATION DOES NOT IMPLY ENDORSEMENT, APPROVAL, OR RECOMMENDATION BY THE STATE."

REGISTRATION # sc-07923. 100% OF YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS ARE RECEIVED BY THE BROWARD AUTISM FOUNDATION.

Autism Society of America
Broward Chapter

PO Box 450476
Sunrise, FL 33345
Phone: 954-577-4141
E-Mail: info@asabroward.org

Our Next Meeting: March 15, 2006 @ 7:30pm

Special Needs Summer Camps

With representatives from various camps

Where? ARC Broward, 10250 NW 53rd Street, Building #2, Sunrise
(One block south of Commercial Blvd. between Nob Hill Road & Hiatus Road)

Our meetings are open to all that are interested in Autism.
Refreshments will be served.
Childcare is provided by reservation only; please call 954-577-4141.

We're on the Web!
www.asabroward.org