

Boosting immunity naturally

In the second and final part of his series on vaccination, naturopath Philip Weeks explores natural alternatives to the needle.

In the last issue I discussed some of the arguments against vaccination. I believe that whether you choose to vaccinate your children or not, it is important to be as informed as possible about the risks. If you decide not to vaccinate then you need to be aware of the childhood diseases, how to recognise them and know when it is necessary for your child to be referred to a health professional.

No treatment, either conventional or alternative, offers absolute cover. In this article I will give some general guidelines. However, I suggest that you consult an experienced local practitioner who has supported other children in this process. This article is by no means exhaustive and every case needs to be assessed individually.

There are a number of approaches that can be applied to support your child. Many people in the alternative arena of health encourage children to get childhood diseases such as measles, mumps and chickenpox. I know of a number of parents who have organised 'measles parties' so their children can get infected and then they can support them actively through the process.

There is immunological research suggesting a strong benefit to a person's immune system if they have contracted and recovered naturally from childhood diseases such as measles. Some consider it an important part of exercising the immune system to prepare a child for healthy adult life. I personally believe that if a child is carefully monitored and supported through its childhood diseases they are less likely to get problems with allergies and autoimmune disorders in adult life.

Ensuring good nutrition is one of the most important things parents can do for their children. Ideally, children are breastfed; this certainly supports their overall immunity and their ability to cope with infections throughout their life. Essentially the diet needs to be sugar free for as long as possible, and free from junk and excessively processed food. I have found that many children thrive on a vegetarian diet of wholesome food, prepared according to their individual constitution.

However it might be useful to supplement their diet with at least 50 micrograms

of vitamin B12 once a week. This is a common deficiency and not exclusively in those following plant-based diets.

An example of the key role nutrition plays is found in vitamin A. Evidence that vitamin A supplementation can prevent deaths and complications from measles comes primarily from African countries where vitamin A status is marginal. In controlled trials in South Africa, vitamin A supplementation dramatically reduced the number of deaths in children with severe measles. In the South African study, children receiving the vitamin also recovered more rapidly from pneumonia and diarrhoea, had a lower incidence of croup, and spent fewer days in the hospital than those receiving the placebo. I am sure as time goes on other nutrients will also come to light as being essential for recovery from childhood illnesses. Basic factors which I have found to be key to bringing up healthy, vaccine-free children include:



- Breastfeeding followed by good ongoing nutrition
- An emotionally stable home environment
- Low toxicity levels in the household: by avoiding polish, chemical cleaners, air fresheners, fluoride toothpaste, etc
- Administering safe, effective treatment when they get childhood diseases, such as homeopathy, herbs and acupuncture
- Regular constitutional treatment to support the child's life force and immunity

Treating like with like

For extra cover, some parents like to use homeopathic preventives. I personally use these when travelling to India. Some of these remedies are called nosodes, which means they are made from an extract of the disease itself. The understanding is that taking very small doses prepares the immune system – this is very similar to the rationale behind orthodox vaccinations.

Known as homeoprophylaxis, this method was first used by Dr Samuel Hahnemann, the modern father of homeopathy.

A famous case Hahnemann recounts is when he treated a young girl with the remedy belladonna for a particular unrelated issue. However, later when all her family fell ill with scarlet fever, it was noted that she didn't contract the illness herself. Homeopathy became famous in the 19th century for its ability to prevent cholera. In the 1854 London Cholera Epidemic, under allopathic medical care the mortality rates of the victims was 59%; under homeopathic care it was 9%.

A more recent example is from the homeopath and researcher Heisfelder. In a study conducted between 1956-58, over 6,000 children were given a homeopathic remedy called Lathyrus. The result: no side effects and not a single case of polio. In 1975, during a polio epidemic in Buenos Aires, Lathyrus was given to 40,000 people. Again, not a single case of polio was recorded.

Homeopathic remedies seem to stimulate the whole immune response; however unlike some orthodox vaccines they do not produce measurable disease antibodies in the blood. So if this is a route you would like to explore, find a good homeopath who will develop a programme for your child. Many children respond well to general health-building measures and only require support with herbs, homeopathy or acupuncture when they contract an infection. There are no hard and fast rules; however it is useful to know there are a number of approaches.

Vaccine damage

This area is fraught with more controversy than the question of whether to vaccinate or not. In the past 10 years vaccine damage has come into the public arena more than ever before, through people like Dr Andrew Wakefield. It is widely recognised that vaccines can and do cause side effects and that they can cause permanent damage and even disability. On the UK's government public information and service website www.direct.gov.uk is the statement: 'If you're severely disabled as a result of a vaccination against certain diseases, you may be able to get a Vaccine Damage Payment, a one-off tax-free payment of £120,000'. So although it is officially recognised that disability can occur, there is still denial of its links to other conditions such as autism, inflammatory bowel disease, autoimmune conditions, cot death, chronic fatigue and cancer. In my practice I have personally seen and treated many cases of vaccine damage.

I sometimes get a call from a parent whose child has just been vaccinated and is having some kind of reaction – often a high fever or a skin outbreak. Usually the prescription of a homeopathic antidote of the vaccine, or a remedy such as Thuja Occidentalis, can take away the immediate distress. More often than not glue ear in children is related to a toxin residue from the MMR or DPT vaccine.

However, in many cases the symptoms of vaccine toxicity only manifest years, and often even decades, later. One clear case of chronic damage was an air hostess who was suffering from chronic fatigue and colitis. Through testing I detected that she had a large amount of toxicity from vaccines. In fact because of her career and extensive travelling she had had boosters for all of the vaccines annually for the last 10 years!

The toxic burden was so great that her immune system was no longer functioning properly. I gradually antidoted the toxicity with remedies made from the samples of the vaccines. I also used the herbs burdock, chaparral and red clover, all of which have blood purifying properties. It took six months for her to fully recover and become well again. Whilst the remedies started to take effect she would get aches and slight swelling at the original injection site of the vaccines.

Another patient had low-level backache for a number of years. I traced it to toxicity from the polio vaccine and within a few days of this being removed the backache went and five years later hasn't reappeared. Not everyone notices such tangible improvements, of course, but

Healthy Travel

When travelling I personally use a nosode of the particular illness I want to prevent (or reduce the severity of if contracted). However, the first rule to observe when in developing countries without adequate sanitation is that food should be served piping hot to prevent infections such as polio and hepatitis A. Tap water must also be avoided.

Here is an example of a schedule I use when I travel to India:

- Malaria Nosode 30c once a week
- Hepatitis A & B 30c once a week
- Tetanus Toxin 30c once a week
- Cholera/Typhoid 30c once a week

There are other remedies I might also use for malaria such as Chinese Wormwood or Artemesia Annu (available as Wormwood complex).

Keeping healthy when travelling is a huge subject so I have just cited some initial pointers to start you off with your own research. There is much information available online and, as ever, the best route of all is to consult a qualified practitioner who can develop a programme tailored to your needs and constitution.

the overall toxic burden is reduced which will support immune response, potentially preventing health issues in the future.

Although removing the toxicity from the vaccine is sometimes enough, in some cases the overall constitution of the individual has been so eroded that it is also essential to support that person by making sure their nutrition is optimum and that their lifestyle is in harmony with their constitution.

The controversy over vaccination is here to stay. The decision is a complicated one and people need to make a truly informed choice whatever they decide. However I think that the full impact of vaccination toxicity has yet to be fully known and understood.

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