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For twenty years now I have advocated natural approaches to health care: pain care that restores function and doesn't involve drugs. Too often, I see the end results of long-term use of over-the-counter or prescription medications in adults, when liver and kidney function become impaired or the patient makes their musculoskeletal condition worse by performing activities they would not have done had they not masked the pain.

Now lung function is being linked to a common over-the-counter medicine. Asthma, a condition that has become epidemic in our children and adults, is being linked to mild use of acetaminophen. While currently controversial, and with the knowledge that further studies need to occur to explore these outcomes, these groundbreaking studies were published in the American Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine.

Over 1,000 Ethiopian babies were followed over three years. Researchers asked the mothers if their babies had breathing problems, and how much acetaminophen they had used. Eight percent of the kids began to wheeze between ages one and three. Those who had been given acetaminophen during their first year (before they had respiratory issues) had up to seven times the odds of developing wheezing.

Additionally, findings from the second phase of a study called the "International Study of Asthma and Allergies in Childhood" (ISAAC) which involved 50 countries, 113

clinics, and 322,000 13- and 14-year olds, found teens who take Tylenol more than once per year were 43% more likely to have asthma, 38% more likely to have rhinitis and 31% more likely to have eczema. The third phase of the same study looked at 205,487 6- and 7-year olds in 31 countries and had similar findings. Six and seven years olds who had been given acetaminophen in the first year of their life were 46% more likely to have asthma, 48% more likely to have rhinitis and red, itchy eyes, and 35% more likely to have eczema than other 6- to 7-year olds. For 6- to 7-year olds taking acetaminophen once a month, their risk of current asthma symptoms tripled.

I have spent years trying to give young parents permission to let low grade fevers do their job of killing the pathogen that has created the fever, and have taught them that the body handles illness well if given the opportunity through fever. Many distraught parents have been relieved to know that keeping their infant or child hydrated and giving things time to resolve is okay. Others, obtaining opinions from other doctors, have been assured that a little acetaminophen to lower the fever is just fine... Clearly, based on these studies, it is not.

The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends that acetaminophen only be used to treat children with fevers of greater than 101.3F, and it questions whether acetaminophen is as effective as ibuprofen as a fever reducer. Generally, mainstream medicine encourages drug seeking behavior for fevers rather than educating the parents as to the benefit of fever. The ISAAC study researchers believe that this type of care has contributed to an epidemic of asthma, rhinitis and eczema. Fear of high fever has our entire population feeding acetaminophen to children with low grade fevers, "just in case."

*Is making your child comfortable for a day or two's worth of low grade*

*fever worth the risk of a lifetime issue with asthma, rhinitis or eczema? These are the questions that ALL doctors need to be asking the overly anxious parent who wants to do something for their child.*

**Fever guidelines as advocated by the National Institute of Health (NIH)**

For mild fever (under 101F) with no other problems, no treatment is necessary, other than staying hydrated and resting. Don't worry especially if your child still wants to play, eat and drink well. Water, popsicles, soup, and gelatin are good choices. Avoid sports drinks in young children.

Take steps to lower a fever if your child is uncomfortable, vomiting, dried out (dehydrated), or not sleeping well. (You do not want to eliminate the fever). Don't add layers when the chills start, keep the room comfortable and wear one lightweight layer of clothing with one lightweight blanket. Sponge baths or lukewarm baths may help. Avoid cold baths, ice or alcohol rubs.

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Call a doctor if your child is less than 3 months old with a rectal temperature of 100.4 F or higher; is 3-12 months with a fever of 102.2F or higher; is under two with a fever that lasts longer the 24 to 48 hours; is older than 2 with a fever for 48 to 72 hours, or has a fever over 105F that won't come down.

Crosby Chiropractic & Acupuncture Centre treats all ages and issues, including musculoskeletal problems and more. Call our office for more information or to schedule an appointment.

**The staff of Crosby Chiropractic & Acupuncture Centre**



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