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Mineral Levels in the Body Can Influence Behavior

Learning disabilities, hyperactivity, attention deficit disorders and behavioral problems many times can be traced to mineral levels of the body. Children suffering in these areas have been found to be deficient in many vital minerals and can have high levels of toxic minerals.

Options Center, a privately owned health and education center, is sponsoring lectures by Dr. Richard Malter about his research concerning learning disabilities, ADD and behavioral problems. Using hair/tissue analysis, he will show how a mineral deficit can cause a wide range of these health and learning problems.

L.J. knows firsthand what problems mineral imbalances can cause. Her 9-year-old grandson K.J. is an Options Center client.

A little over a year ago, K.J. was experiencing a multitude of problems. According to Lynda, he was having trouble in school, was "always jumping into things' and would throw fits and tantrums.

'We were at our wits end as to what to do with him," she said. K.J. had been taking a drug very much like Ritalin, the most widely known drug for hyperactivity. Side effects like appetite loss and insomnia took their toll on K.J.. "He looked like a little walking zombie," L.J.said.

So she picked up the phone book and began her search for someone who could help K.J..

Options Center interested her the most because they knew how to "deal with what was causing the problem."

K.J. started on a 16-week program at Options which he thought was fun and helped him to do better in reading and math, but L.J.said he still was having behavioral problems.

Helen Cox, director of Options Center, suggested hair analysis, a technique Dr. Malter has been using with much success for about 15 years.

"We thought we would try anything," Lynda said.

A three-month sample of hair growth is needed to perform the tests, representing about 11/2 inches. It is taken from the layers closest to the scalp and burned in a special machine that analyzes the minerals deposited in the hair.

As Helen explains it, a hair analysis can be much more accurate than a blood test because it shows mineral levels over a period of time, rather than the snapshot of a moment that a blood test shows. What hair analysis shows can lead to prevention, because according to Helen, when something shows up in the blood, the body has broken down enough to cause a physical problem.

In the body, certain minerals balance each other out. For example, calcium and magnesium are sedating minerals, whereas sodium and potassium are stimulating minerals.

K.J. was deficient in calcium and high in both potassium and sodium, meaning that he was

prone to hyperactive behavior. A change in K.J.'s diet - mainly almost total elimination of sugar - and the addition of supplements has helped him dramatically, L.J.said. His mother still keeps a close watch on him and he still takes his supplements. "He's like a changed little boy," L.J.said. 'We had been getting almost daily phone calls from school," but now those have dropped off drastically.

L.J.said K.J. is not problem-free, but he is much improved from his days of picking fights with his classmates.

Helen Cox said more and more families are looking for an alternative to Ritalin and hair analysis is "the best tool I've come across for prevention" of these types of problems.

Dr. Malter is president and clinical director of the Malter Institute for Natural Development, located in Schaumburg. Dr. Malter's special interest is in children with these difficulties. He will address issues related to health and learning. Following his lecture, he and the Options Center staff will suggest ways of identifying and correcting mineral imbalances and improving student learning and behavior.

The "Nutrition and the Mind" lectures will take place at Illinois Central College Room 212C April 18. Dr. Malter will lecture from 12:30-2:30 p.m. and again from 7-9 p.m. Cost is $25 payable at the door. Call 685-7721 for more information.