

EAR INFECTIONS

Staying Healthy with Dr. Aieta, N.D.



BODY, MIND and YOU

Dr. Aieta,
My son started having chronic ear infections when he was 6 months old, and he's had a dozen of them since. We've given him countless rounds of antibiotics and antihistamines over the past two years, but the infections keep coming back. His pediatrician is suggesting he have tubes put in his ears. My husband and I are very hesitant to do this, and were wondering if you had any suggestions for us.

Thank you,
Karen and Jim H.

With all the research pointing to allergies and other dietary considerations as the cause of ear infections, it's amazing how many conventional doctors will still insist that ear tubes are the only effective treatment. Like your son, with careful attention to diet and by using supplements, children need not suffer from this painful condition.

It's astonishing the massive amounts of sugar and refined carbohydrates kids ingest on a daily basis.

Research has clearly shown that ingesting even modest amounts of sugar can have a significantly suppressive effect on the immune system. The first thing I have parents do is to remove sugar and refined carbs from the child's diet; this includes juices, white bread and pasta, excessive amounts of fruit and all snacks and treats that are high in fructose, sucrose, malto-dextrin and corn syrup. Some kids can easily exceed 200 grams of sugar a day. Sometimes they consume that much at just one meal, or with one snack.

Research has shown that immune function can reduce by 50 percent after 45 minutes of eating a meal that contains 60 grams of sugar (the equivalent of just 20 ounces of a cola or juice). So, if at each meal a child is consuming large quantities of sugar, their immune systems will be suppressed all day long.

Food allergy is probably the most important and overlooked factor in children that suffer from recurrent ear infections.

In my experience, at least 80 percent of children with these problems see a significant improvement after offending foods are identified and eliminated from their diet. The most common symptom provoking foods are sugar, dairy products, wheat, corn, eggs, soy and some citrus fruits.

When I recommend that parents have their children eliminate these foods from their diet for at least three weeks, almost all of them see a resolution of symptoms and a reduction in re-occurrences of infection relatively quickly.

I then have them add one food back in at a time to see if symptoms come back. If so, that food is left out of the diet. I also find that supplementing with additional zinc and vitamins C, D and A helps with immune function. All of these nutrients tend to be deficient in children eating a high sugar

and refined-carb diet.

So, if your child is constantly suffering repeat infections, seek the help of a naturopathic physician for some good dietary and supplement advice before you resort to putting tubes in the child's ears.

Dr. Frank Aieta is a board-certified and licensed Naturopathic Physician with a private practice in West Hartford, Conn. He specializes in the treatment of disease, using natural therapies such as acupuncture, homeopathy, spinal manipulation, clinical nutrition, and herbal medicine. E-mail him at DrAieta@aol.com, or visit www.DrAieta.com for additional information.

NOW'S THE TIME

Women's Fitness with Lisa Thomas

It is tough to get into the gym with all the good reality shows on TV, isn't it?

"Get up, and get out," is what I say; you will feel so much better after a workout.

I did my own unscientific study and found out that the hardest part about working out, according to my friends and clients, is the simple act of starting.

Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary defines motivation as "that which gives purpose and direction to behavior." By that definition, we're looking for something or maybe someone to drive us to exercise (or drive us to the gym), something to get us motivated. That motivation may come from a desire to be healthy or to live longer. For most, losing weight is often the goal.

But is that enough to motivate us?

Based on our nation's obesity problems, I'd say "no." I know many people who've been told by their doctors that they must get to the gym for health reasons. Yet they still don't go.

Call me crazy, but when your doctor tells you to get to the gym or suffer the consequences, it's a good idea to pick the gym.

You see, if you think that you'll wake up one day and suddenly miraculously want to go to the gym, then you're fooling yourself. Motivation is something we create, we can't wait for it.

Just deciding to exercise doesn't work for me. When I plan and set a goal, I get excited. It makes me feel good, almost like I've already done something. The problem happens when it comes time to follow through with that goal. It's then that I find my motivation has suddenly disappeared.

If that sounds like you, maybe it's time to focus your attention on what's important.

Start by simply doing the obvious.

Start by setting goals for yourself.

You already know that the first step in motivating yourself is having something to work for. It doesn't matter whether that's a weight-loss goal or a goal to run a marathon. Personalize your goal. Anything that gives you reason to exercise will work, and don't think you have to set only one goal. You can set as many as you like, whenever you like.

I like to set daily goals. For example, today I'm walking 20 minutes and jogging 10 minutes. The next day, I'll do a 10-minute incline walk, then walk for 10 minutes with no incline, when I'll finish with a 10-minute jog.

Maybe set a weekly goal, like working out three times a week. Try this at work: Every hour get up and



walk around your building, or, when your workload is slower than usual, find some stairs to walk up and down for three minutes. Always having something to work for, big or small, is just one way to keep you going.

Lisa Thomas is a personal trainer/fitness coach in the Greater Springfield area, as well as owner of Thomas Fitness Center and Fit Kidz of Massachusetts. Contact her at (413) 426-5543 or t.fitness@hotmail.com, or visit www.thomasfitnesscenter.com.