

Pure Facts

Newsletter of the Feingold® Associations of the United States



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Editorial

The Four R's: Readin' Ritin' Rithmetic and Ritalin

In response to drug advocates, some Feingold volunteers have sarcastically suggested that perhaps hyperactive/ADD children were simply suffering from a "Ritalin deficiency." Now we see the eerie evidence that this notion is being taken seriously.

The Feingold Association is receiving reports from parents who are being told that their child has a chemical deficiency, and that the use of the powerful drug, Ritalin, is a "replacement therapy".

In the past, some laypersons have (mistakenly) compared giving drugs to a hyperactive child with giving insulin to a diabetic. It is unsettling to learn that some parents are now hearing this from professionals.

In 1987 *Pure Facts* addressed the problem parents face when the school suggests a child should be placed on medication. In the past four years, the situation has deteriorated to the point that we now receive reports of teachers showing no reluctance to diagnose (ADHD) and prescribe (Ritalin). Happily, these are outnumbered by reports of teachers going to great lengths to work with parents in accommodating their child's needs.

Depressing news also comes from parents of very young children who are being urged by their physician to put the youngsters on drugs. Recently three such families contacted the FAUS office. Two of the children were two years old and one was eighteen months. *The Physician's Desk Reference* includes the statement from Ciba Geigy, the manufacturer of Ritalin, that "Ritalin should not be used in children under six years, since safety and efficacy in this age group have not been established."

In the same section, the manufacturer states, "There is neither specific evidence which clearly establishes the



mechanism whereby Ritalin produces its mental and behavioral effects in children, nor conclusive evidence regarding how these effects relate to the condition of the central nervous system."

(*Physician's Desk Reference*, 39th Edition, page 865)

Some parents report having been told by a counselor, "If you really loved him, you'd put him on Ritalin." In each case this was said in the presence of the child.

ADD groups

Pressure can also come from parent support groups. There are numerous groups which have formed around the country to help parents of children diagnosed as having ADD or ADHD (attention deficit disorder, or attention deficit, hyperactivity disorder).

Support groups can be of enormous help, especially for the parent who is having difficulty obtaining special services from their school.

But take a good look at the group.

* Is it operated by parent volunteers or by a professional who may have a vested interest in promoting one form of treatment?

* Is information available on more than one approach to ADD, or is the literature obviously supplied by pharmaceutical companies?

* If you are using the Feingold Program, are the group leaders interested in hearing about your experiences with the program?

For some children Ritalin may be the appropriate treatment; for others, diet alone, or in combination with counseling or medication may work best. But every child deserves to be given an unbiased evaluation, as well as the opportunity to benefit from the most benign method possible.

As Dr. McGuinness points out in the accompanying article, however, there is reason to believe that the use of stimulant medication — estimated at 1 million children in the United States — greatly exceeds its actual need.

"Once prescribed primarily as an adult stimulant medication to be taken for short periods of time, Ritalin is currently prescribed as a childhood behavior suppressant to be taken for several years. And it is prescribed with such regularity that critics have coined their own term for the substance: the teacher's and parents' relief drug."

Mothering, Summer 1991

The Feingold® Associations of the United States, Inc., founded in 1976, are non-profit volunteer organizations whose purposes are to support their members in the implementation of the Feingold Program and to generate public awareness of the potential role of foods and synthetic additives in behavior, learning and health problems. The program is based on a diet eliminating synthetic colors, synthetic flavors, and the preservatives BHA, BHT, and TBHQ.

“Making It”

“Boys will be boys” I was told, and so I thought...but deep inside there was a feeling that there was more, so I looked and listened. As time went by help came, ideas changed and questions were answered.

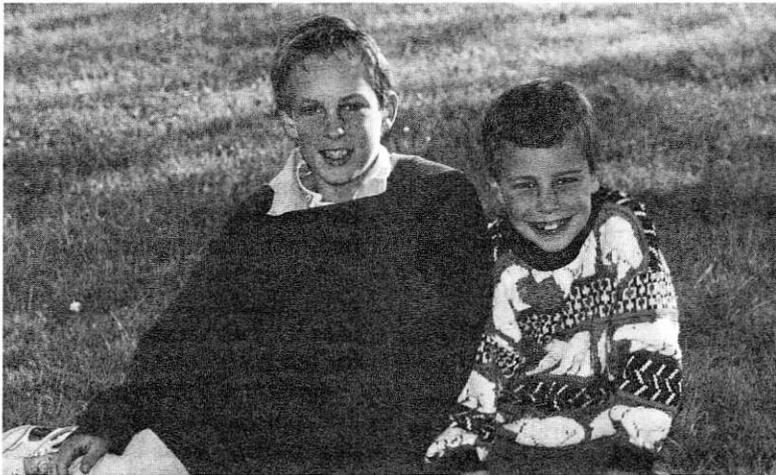
Life with Dustin took off like a bang. He was happy, healthy and ACTIVE. It was wonderful to watch a growing baby, although it took two of us to keep up with him (and neither of us got much sleep).

School began and the fun seemed over. Nothing fit right. “Too active,” “won’t follow orders” were complaints we heard. Reprimands went in one ear and out the other. Dustin couldn’t seem to handle school, or the frustra-

At first I kept looking for a major change...sometimes I need to be hit with a truck before I see. Would his hair turn green or suddenly he’d take to college math? No, it didn’t come like that, but I realized the change one day. After being on the diet for about 2 weeks Dustin (age 8) was alone in his bedroom singing...just singing. I hadn’t heard sounds like that since he was two. “My baby is back” are the words that went through my head.

what he can’t doesn’t work. Instead they have isolated the problem and encouraged the rest. To be specific, Dustin’s disability is in the area of visual memory...this affects spelling. Creative writing has been encouraged at school, in spite of the spelling. We correct the spelling after the creating is done, and work on spelling at test time. As a result, Dustin likes to write. Enclosed is one of his creations.

*Sharon Marks
Napa, CA*



Dustin and his younger brother, Russell

tion that this brought. We did what we could to deal with the lack of confidence, anger, defiance and tears. Still, I felt there was more; boys will be boys, but we aren’t going to make it like this!

Slowly, questions were answered...a disability? Yes. The Feingold diet? Why not give it a try...what’s there to lose? To put it simply, it’s just a healthy diet, so, off we went!

And now life goes on and we are making it. We are making it with less frustration, with the abilities to concentrate and resolve problems, and with smiles. With confidence and motivation, school is working. There’s no green hair and boys will be boys, and that part is just fine with me.

P.S. A special note about how school is going. Dustin’s teachers have recognized that to force him to try to do

My head feels like it is filled up with glue when I eat colers. It looks like my lages have just been hit by 200 volts of frisky lighting the way they wiz through the house once they have been insereted with colers. I look like a hurd of mad bufilow wen I eat colers and flavors when I am angry. My temper slaps me around with its fearse actions until I fall down not knowing what to do and fealing tarible. For some people, once Artifical coler and flavor attacks, just like a crab, it never lets go. But if you avoud Artifishal colers and flavors the deidly poison can not harm you.

Dustin Marks

The High Cost of Poor Health

One of the unexpected benefits of the Feingold Program is that families report the health of all their members improves.

There is a direct connection between the health of a family and the economic health of a nation, and our nation’s health does not look good. We spend 50% more on health care than Canada, more than double what Japan spends, and triple the cost in Great Britain. Yet our life expectancy is lower here in the U.S. and our infant mortality is higher.

Lee Iacocca reports that Chrysler’s bill for the health care costs of its employees is higher than what it pays U.S. Steel. The consumer who buys a basic U.S. automobile pays 10% of the sticker price for the health care of the employees.

The American Journal of Public Health has reported that on a typical day 40% of Americans don’t have a single piece of fruit, 20% eat no vegetables, and more than 80% eat no whole grain breads or cereals. While the Feingold Program does not require families to switch from highly processed to more nourishing foods, this is generally what happens. A greater awareness of foods and their importance usually results in better choices...and improved health.

The Problems with Giving Stimulants to Children

The following is a summary and interpretation of information provided in the article "Stimulants and Children" by Diane McGuinness, published in the summer 1991 issue of Mothering Magazine. Dr. McGuinness is the author of *When Children Don't Learn* and is Associate Professor of Psychology at the University of Florida.

Stimulant medicine has become increasingly popular as a quick "miracle" cure to help calm overactive children, promote academic success and improve a child's social relations. While it clearly does reduce motor activity, critics contend it does not improve a child's ability to learn or to get along with other children, and that it can have serious side effects. Parents may be unaware it is classified as a "controlled substance" by the Drug Enforcement Administration.

Studies estimate that over 1 million schoolchildren in the United States are being medicated for attentional, behavioral, and learning problems. Ritalin (methylphenidate hydrochloride) is the stimulant most commonly prescribed for these children. It is similar to amphetamines, causing chemical changes in the brain which "move(s) an organism into a narrowly focused attentional state accompanied by a sharp reduction in motor activity".

This type of physical state may be seen as desirable for the classroom, but it actually helps the teacher more than the student. Considerable evidence shows that drug-induced attention states do not improve learning or social relations.

"We do know that long-term use of certain drugs can permanently modify the ratios of neurotransmitters in the brain."

The long-term effects of Ritalin are unknown because the necessary studies have not been carried out. Known side-effects include: insomnia, nausea, headaches and more serious consequences such as stunted growth and

weight loss as a result of the medication interfering with the production of growth hormones.

McGuinness writes: "Growth suppressed by methylphenidate [Ritalin] has been shown to rebound during drug-free periods, such as summer vacations. In addition, although height and weight may be reduced in the first year of a drug regime, they generally increase to normal levels during the second year. The assumption is that various hormones regulating growth and metabolism readjust to the drug to compensate for losses in weight and height. While this may be comforting

"Aware of the instant and "miraculous" behavioral changes wrought by stimulant drugs, parents are seduced into believing that these drug-induced changes will promote academic success and improved social relations."

on one level, it is further evidence of long-term changes in brain neurochemistry as well as evidence of tolerance to the drug."

Similar questions have been raised concerning the effect of stimulant medicine on the heart rate and blood pressure.

There are many other side effects of stimulants found in the medical literature. In addition, there are numerous prescription and over-the-counter medicines which should not be combined with Ritalin (such as Dristan, Robitussin, Vicks Sinex).

Proponents claim Ritalin is nonaddictive, but some of its effects suggest

this may not be so. Children who develop a tolerance to it require an increase in the dose in order to get the same effect. Another indication of possible addiction is what is called the "rebound effect" — when the drug is withdrawn the child responds with a level of activity much higher than before taking the drug.

Physicians in Great Britain have stopped prescribing stimulants for children. They share the author's concern that "...a drug that acts on the brain should be prescribed only in circumstances of actual or suspected brain damage....To safeguard health, drugs should be used as a last resort."

Children who are prescribed stimulant medication are rarely if ever given a physical brain analysis, in fact the diagnosis of ADHD is typically based on a questionnaire or observation of a list of symptoms. She contends, "Neither of these instruments has any validity, according to a number of studies."

"...long-term regimes may interfere with the body's production of dopamine, perhaps leading to the early onset of Parkinson's disease"

McGuinness concludes, "Inattention and fidgetiness are not in and of themselves "a syndrome"; they are symptoms of a variety of situational and temperamental factors. When we give drugs to treat these symptoms while ignoring their causes, we put the child in double jeopardy. This child is then at risk for experiencing continued emotional and academic problems, as well as the damaging effects of the drug itself."

Mothering Magazine has given the Feingold Association permission to offer our members reprints of the original article. To obtain the complete article, send a long, SASE (self-addressed, stamped envelope) to: FAUS/Ritalin reprint, P.O. Box 6550, Alexandria, VA 22306.

Comments we have heard from parents:

● "The medicine subdued our child and made it easier for everyone to be around him. But drugs don't teach you how to deal with issues or solve problems. Our medicated son didn't learn the skills he needed in order to get along in the world."

● "I have asked every doctor I've seen about what happens when a drug causes a child to stop growing. We don't grow in just one arm or leg at a time; every part of us grows. If my child's visible body isn't growing, what about his heart or his brain? How do we know what will happen if growth is stunted in these areas? So far no doctor has been able to give me an answer."

● "I don't understand why people have so much trouble believing that a small amount of a synthetic chemical food additive can make a child hyper. We know that a tiny pill called "stimulant medication" can have a dramatic effect on calming down a hyperactive child's behavior. Why is it so hard for people to see that it can work in reverse?"

Feingold Members "Adopt" Families

Many Feingold members received a letter inviting them to "adopt a family". The response has been heartwarming.

When the economy took a nosedive, many families found they could not afford the cost of membership in the Feingold Association, and requested our help. (Membership costs are kept as low as possible; we are able to do this because our volunteers pay most of their own expenses.)

Unfortunately, the economic crunch which has hurt so many households has been felt in the Feingold Association as well. That, along with the significant increase in the number of families needing membership help, created a financial crisis in the organization. For the first time in our 15 years, we faced the prospect of running out of money!

Responding to our SOS, many of our members have sent not only a contribution, but some wonderful letters as well. Here is a sample:

It is with gratitude that I write this check. It (the amount) in no way reflects how much the Feingold Program has helped our child and our family. We could never put a price on the growth of D--- and the peace & harmony that resides with us now.

The lack of negative communication from the school is not missed a bit, the acknowledgement of her continued success is accepted graciously (I try hard not to double check that they have the correct name on the folder in front of them at our conferences).

We still have other problems to deal with, but the Feingold Program was the beginning of our child's success in life."

LM, Alabama



"I am sorry that I can't help more right now. This [enclosed check] is for 2 Handbooks I had ordered. I want to help later. We've changed jobs. [My husband and I] will be teachers and want to help others with the diet."

MB, Minnesota

"Enclosed is \$100.00 for the general (operating) fund and \$30.00 for a needy family."

O&CC, Florida

"I am a single parent now, but truly appreciate the knowledge, work, and help you have shared with me. This donation is not much, but I hope it will help. Thank you!"

DM, Oregon

It has been gratifying to be able to share our information with these newly adopted members. Most are single parents or families who have lost their source of income. Generally they have a young child in need of help, but there are other situations as well.

One of our newly adopted members is a single parent with a son, age 23, who has been following the program from Dr. Feingold's books for many years.

He was profoundly helped, is doing beautifully today and is studying for the ministry. Mom wants to join in order to try and help the children in her community who are having learning and behavior problems. Her membership will reach many, many others.

Another adopted member is a young man in a California prison. Dr. Feingold's work comes too late to prevent whatever tragic story lies behind his imprisonment, but not too late for him to begin to rebuild his life. He writes: "Thank you for the information about your program! It was very helpful and I am sharing it with my fellow inmates. I also want to thank you for the wonderful card "I know I'm good 'cuz God don't make no junk". I hope and pray that you have added my name to your mailing list because I want to be kept well informed. I'm so very grateful and truly and deeply appreciate your help. God bless you always."

1990-1991 School Year Calendar

Once again, Feingold members in the United States are receiving their Feingold School Year Calendar.

The calendar is designed to do more than tell you what day it is! It contains information on food additives, acceptable products, and hints gathered from experienced members.



In the front of the calendar is a list of addresses and phone numbers of our advertisers. Contact them with your suggestions, and perhaps a compliment or two. By letting them know that Feingold members appreciate their products you will encourage them to make even more items available for us.

Teachers, relatives and neighbors who come in contact with your child need to understand this program before they can provide support. The calendar is a good way to teach them and enlist their cooperation. You can order additional copies for them.

If you joined the Association after the calendars were distributed, or if you live outside of the United States you can still order a calendar. Send your name and full address, along with a \$5 donation (U.S. funds) to: FAUS Calendar, P.O. Box 6550, Alexandria, VA 22306.

Good news down in the Bayou

Feingold mom, Marilyn Yunker, reports that the public schools in her area (Bossier City, Louisiana) will provide a special school lunch three times a week for any child who follows a restricted diet.

Your schools many have a similar policy. Contact the main administrative office and ask to speak with the director of food services. Your school may be able to accommodate your child's needs. Please let us know.

Peanut Butter and What?

If you're on Stage I you will find the selection of jams and jellies is limited, but as with everything else on the Feingold Program, there's always a way around it.

Nancy Brockman prefers to make her own since her child is sensitive to some of the salicylates and to corn syrup (found in most jams and jellies). Here is her recipe for Easy Pineapple Jam:

Use canned crushed pineapple in its own juice; about 3 large cans work well. For each cup of pineapple/juice use 2/3 cup sugar.

Place the pineapple and sugar in a heavy saucepan or pot. The bottom of a pressure cooker is a good choice.

Bring it to a boil over medium-high heat, stirring occasionally. The mixture should continue to cook at a moderate boil in order to evaporate most of the liquid. Stir the mixture often to keep the sugar from burning and the contents from boiling over. If you must leave the room for more than a few minutes, lower the heat or turn it off.

After the jam has thickened, pour it into "sterilized" (in the dishwasher) jars and put the lids on. Cool and refrigerate.

Pear Jam

The same technique will work for pears and you can use canned pears packed in their own juice. Thinly slice or dice the pears; or make a smoother jam by running them through a blender or food processor. Use 2/3 cup of sugar for each 1 cup of pears/juice. Cook as with the pineapple jam.

A New Kind of "Ice Milk"

Researchers at the U.S. Department of Agriculture have found a way to make a frozen concentrated milk, similar to orange juice concentrate which was originally developed by the agency.

They removed the naturally occurring butterfat and replaced it with oil – from soybeans, corn or peanuts. The researchers found a way to blend the oil in so it does not separate, and has the consistency of whole milk. This will appeal to some consumers since it will have less cholesterol.

Those who are allergic to soy, corn or peanuts will not be as pleased, however. It remains to be seen if USDA will require the source of oil to be labeled.



New Products

A.M. Braswell Food Company has Fig Preserves and Pear preserves which have been researched and found acceptable. (Both contain corn sweeteners.)

To learn more about finding Braswell's products in your area, or ordering by mail, contact: A. M. Braswell Food Co., Inc., P.O. Box 485, Statesboro, GA 30458 (912) 764-6191.

Trappist brand Kadota Fig Preserve has been researched and found acceptable for use. It contains figs, sugar, corn syrup, citric acid, fruit pectin and lemon juice. Trappist preserves are available nationwide, or for more information, contact St. Joseph's Abbey, Spencer, MA 01562 (508) 885-4773.

Other Choices

Sweeteners which can be used in place of jam/jelly include: ripe banana slices, date sugar, honey, maple syrup or rice syrup (blend these liquids in with the peanut butter).

Let the Shopper Beware

There are so many new versions of old favorites being introduced in the marketplace. Some of the products Feingold members use now have "Lite" or "Free" versions. Be careful! The removal of one ingredient, be it a fat, sugar, sodium, etc., can mean the addition of another. Sometimes these new ingredients are ones we eliminate.

Members can also find it confusing when one flavor is acceptable and another is not.

If you have your *Foodlist* with you at the store, check it before you put that new version of a familiar product in your basket.

Make your young scholars happy by adding some **Berenstain Bears Cookies** to their lunchbox.



These vanilla cookies, by D.F. Stauffer Biscuit Co. of York, PA, have been researched and found to be acceptable for the Feingold Program. (They contain corn syrup.)

Plan an "S.O.S. lunch"

The Feingold Association of the Northeast suggests you ask the school to keep a lunch for your child in the cafeteria freezer for that unknown moment when one is forgotten or lost.

It is also a good idea to keep a special cupcake and portion of ice cream in the freezer for unexpected last minute parties.

The Feingold® Associations do not endorse, approve or assume responsibility for any product, brand, method or treatment. The presence (or absence) of a product on a Feingold foodlist, or the discussion of a method or treatment does not constitute approval (or disapproval). The foodlists are based primarily upon information supplied by manufacturers, and are not based upon independent testing.

Those Pesky Pests!

Discourage ants by sprinkling chili powder at your doorways or where they come into your house.

(*The Solution to Pollution – 101 Things You Can Do to Clean Up Your Environment*)

A non-toxic plant spray can be made by mixing 2 tablespoons Ivory liquid soap with a gallon of water. Spray to get rid of aphids and mites. A few hours later, rinse the plants with clear water.

(*Bug Busters: Poison-Free Pest Controls for Your House and Garden*)

Help for your Pets

The Bio Integral Resource Center (BIRC) is an organization which promotes the least toxic methods of managing pests of all kinds (not human pests, however).

Many pet owners want to avoid the synthetic flea repellants because they contain substances which act as nerve poisons. As an alternative they rely on natural substances.

BIRC cautions pet owners that even natural flea repellants, such as the popular pyrethrins derived from chrysanthemums, are not without their hazards.

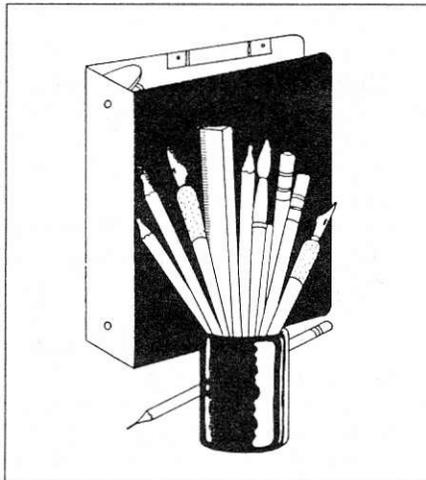
BIRC publishes "*Least Toxic Flea Management*". Send \$6 to: BIRC, P.O. Box 7414, Berkeley, CA 94707.

The Chemically-Sensitive Adult

Those Feingold adults (or children) who are extremely sensitive may have already determined that they react to formaldehyde – a chemical used in many household items, including fabrics and particle board.

Consumers who were harmed by the effects of formaldehyde in particle board brought suit against the manufacturer, Georgia Pacific, and they won \$16.2 million.

This was reported in the *Human Ecologist*, published by the Human Ecology Action League (HEAL), P.O. Box 49126, Atlanta, GA 30359. (404) 248-1898.



Meet Your Pen Pal!

Not only do Feingold pen pals have a buddy to share notes with, but they now receive their own newsletter: *Pen Pal Paper*, edited by Kathy Leinen. Kathy reports a good response from Feingold kids both in the United States and beyond. If you have not already signed up or signed your child up, you may use the enclosed form. Mail it to:

Kathy Leinen, 344 North Aspen, Rialto, CA 92376

Please sign me up with a Pen Pal this age:

5 & under w/parent 12, 13, 14 (grades 7, 8, 9)

6, 7, 8 (grades 1, 2, 3) 15 and older

9, 10, 11 (grades 4, 5, 6) I prefer to write to a:
___ boy ___ girl ___ either

My name _____

Age _____ Boy _____ Girl _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Mailbag

"I have been trying to keep my hyperactive boy on the Feingold diet.

"We have one real difficult behavior problem. Joshua will want food at night and he goes to the kitchen and gets anything he wants and takes it and gobbles it up! He has a problem lying and stealing at school also. They have put him in the behavior disorders room at school.

"I wondered if anyone else has expressed frustration at their child's extreme impulsiveness such as the stealing we experience.

"Rewards or punishment have not seemed to make any impression.

"Josh has a high I.Q. and is 7 years old."

M.W.

Response

Until a child is well stabilized on the Program, parents of a seven year old must assume responsibility for as many things as possible – including the food in the refrigerator. All of the food in the house should be Stage I so that if he decides on a midnight raid he will find the refrigerator filled with an assortment of things he can eat.

It's unfair to expect a child this age and this new to the Feingold Program to be able to cope with "forbidden foods" in his own home. If she wants to use the Program, M.W. needs to go back and review the *Feingold Handbook* and Dr. Feingold's two books, and make the decision to support her son.

Pure Facts

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