

C MONDAY, MAY 26, 2008

## FamilyLife

■ Celebrate badges of motherhood C2

■ Latest DVDs for kids C7

Happy Musings

by Sally Huss

Sand patiently lies  
in wait for summer feet  
to come and massage it.  
Patience has its rewards.

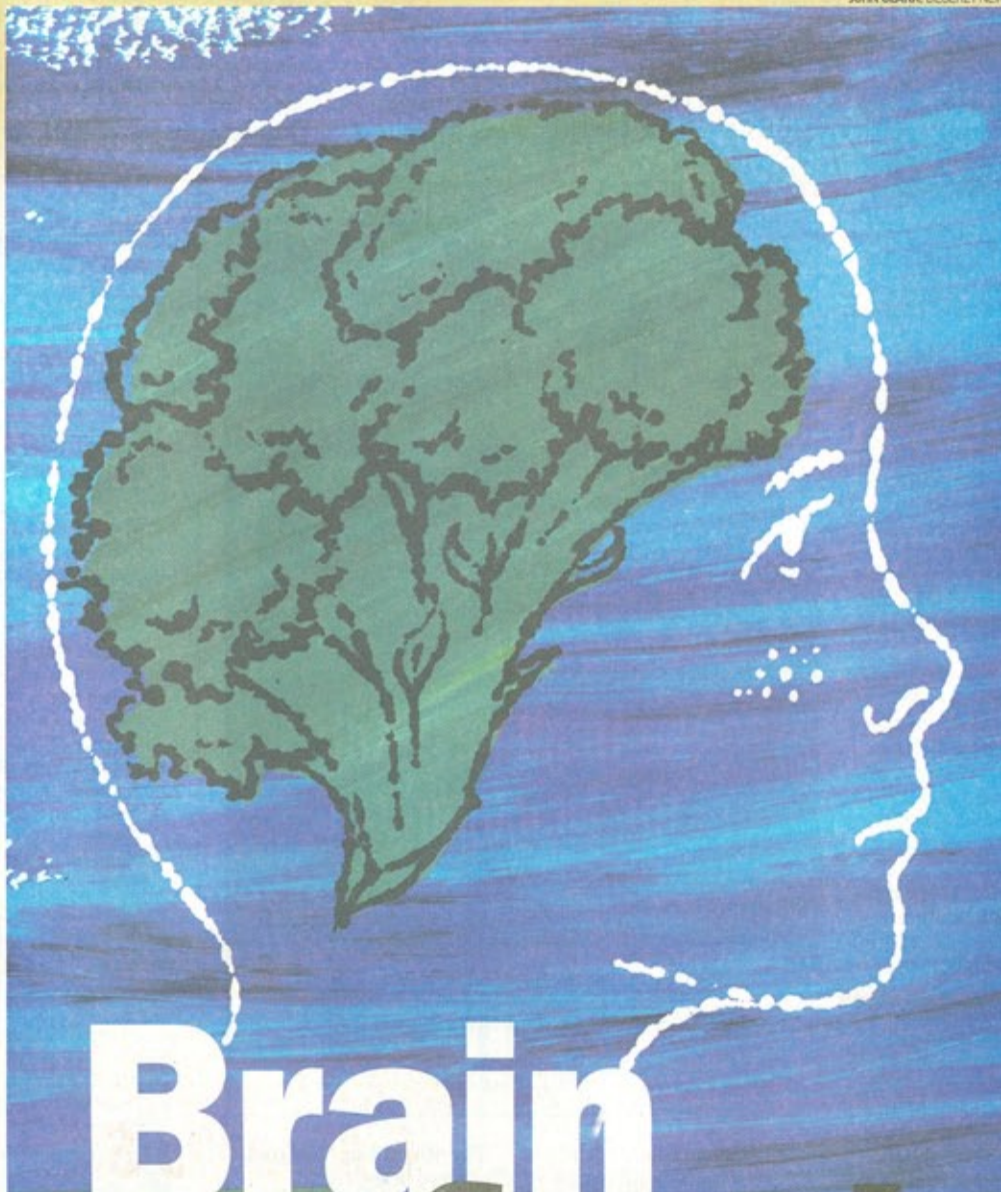


DESERET NEWS

ANGELYN N. HUTCHINSON, FEATURE EDITOR, 237-2150

## Health

JOHN CLARK, DESERET NEWS



Doctor says diet affects  
kids' behavior, learning

Brain  
food

By Lois M. Collins  
Deseret News

Pediatrician and author Dr. William "Bill" Sears was asked to examine a 5-year-old boy whose teacher was sure he had attention-deficit disorder.

It's a common diagnosis, made as often by parents and teachers as it is by health-care professionals. Sears, though, has a different theory to account for some of the cases.

He believes that many of the children who reportedly suffer from ADD actually have NDD — nutrition-deficit disorder. Meals that should be helping them develop strong brains and healthy bodies are, instead, sabotaging them.

"The brain, above all other organs in the body, is affected for better or worse by what you eat," Sears, co-author with his nurse wife and two physician sons of "The

Healthiest Kid in the Neighborhood," told the Deseret News in a telephone interview. "I believe that's why so many kids are being tagged with D's — disorders and diseases. No wonder they can't behave well with the junk that's put into breakfast. When parents pay more attention to how children eat, it makes a tremendous difference."

It's not always an easy switch because too many children have become accustomed to and want the nutrient-deficient junk foods. But the payoff, he said, is clear: Children are healthier and they do better in school.

"Sometimes I'll just say to a parent, don't be a nutritional wimp. This is what

Please see **NUTRITION** on C2

## NUTRITION

Continued from C1

we eat. I love you, honey, and I can't let you put this in your body."

Parents tell him that children won't eat differently. "Well, yes, they will."

The biggest deficiency, nutrition-wise, he said, is a dearth of Omega-3 fats, those found in seafood. It's no surprise, he adds, because "children are generally not fond of fish." But the brain is 60 percent fat and if you don't eat the right fat, the brain is going to feel it. He recommends that all school-age kids get plenty of Omega-3 fats. He suggests wild salmon a couple of times a week. "And it's always better to get nutrition from real foods rather than pills or supplements," he adds. If kids absolutely won't eat it, then it might be time to try a supplement.

A recent study in England that he likes to cite put schoolchildren on Omega-3 supplements and found that their learning, behavior and grades all went up," he said.

Is it a fad? "No. I'm a very science-based person," Sears said. "I don't talk about or preach something unless there's a lot of good science behind it. When it comes to Omega-3s, there's more science about that than about anything in the history of nutrition."

He said the secret is DHA, also found in human milk—and believed to be why chil-

dren who are breastfed seem to be healthier and smarter—and listed on fish and supplement packaging. "Look for 300-600."

One trick to get kids involved in making better nutrition choices is to make it both easy and simple, he said. He tells moms to treat supermarkets as a giant nutritional classroom and teach a few principles. "Bad words" on food labels include "high-fructose corn syrup," "hydrogenated" and "anything with a number on it, like red dye 5."

Not all bad choices include one or more of those, but about 90 percent do. "And if you become a 90-percent mom, that's pretty good," he said. "If you can make just that simple change, you're going to do fine. And kids can remember that."

At the supermarket, send the kids to scout out those words on labels, he said. And have them find labels without those words.

There are green-light, yellow-light and red-light foods, according to Sears. Most of the green-light foods are on the perimeter of the store, including fruits, vegetables and yogurts. Red-light foods "we just don't eat. They're not good for you." He includes among those pretty much everything on the sweetened beverage aisle. As for the yellow lights, they're the "sometimes foods, the treat foods."

He also preaches the art of grazing, which he calls Dr. Bill's Rule of 2: Eat twice as often, half as much and chew



SEARCHING PARENTING LIBRARY

## The Healthiest Kid in the Neighborhood

Ten Ways to Get Your Family on the Right Nutritional Track

William Sears, M.D., Martha Sears, R.N., James Sears, M.D., and Robert Sears, M.D.

Authors of *The Family Nutrition Book*

twice as long. "There's a lot of good science behind grazing. Children behave better and learn better. That's why kids should have a good mid-morning or afternoon snack."

Even healthful foods, such as yogurt, have fallen victim to the three "bad words," with dyes and high fructose added. That's why it's important to read the labels, he said.

The other thing? Eat your fruits and vegetables.

The book, which he cowrote with his wife Martha, a registered nurse and sons James and Robert, also both MDs, explains how the brain develops and why food can have such an impact for good and evil. It also offers not only tips, but recipes for "brain food."

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