

Save The Tonsils!

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Children are continually losing the battle to live healthy lives when it is becoming more common for having key parts to our immune system repeatedly stressed or even removed. Unfortunately since removing the tonsils is done so frequently, we start believing that this is the right thing to do. More and more often, we have to be advocates for our health and the first step is to ask questions.

Tonsils are a cluster of lymph nodes in the back of the throat. Lymph nodes make the lymphatic system and filter out toxins, bacteria, viruses, particles and waste products from our body. They allow you to excrete harmful substance without irritating or over burdening our respiratory and digestive systems by housing specific cells that gobble up these substances. Lymph nodes are located in greater quantities around the face, neck, under arms and groin. Sometimes these cells can get overwhelmed as they take in more and more of these harmful materials, causing them to swell. This is more common to see in the tonsils since we take in most of the harmful material through breathing and eating, especially since there are many more pesticides, herbicides and chemicals in the air and in our food than ever before. When the lymph nodes get swollen, they have an incredibly hard time filtering and can keep harmful substances in our body. This reaction can be caused by a virus or bacteria that our immune system has trouble fighting or it can also be caused by an allergy or intolerance to everyday substances you may be in contact through on a daily basis. Substances you may be intolerant to can be anything like pet dander, particular foods (dairy products, wheat products, nuts, etc), chemicals in our food (red dye #5, MSG, BPA, etc), bacteria, viruses, and fungi. When our body is sensitive to a trigger, an inflammation process is started and can visibly be seen in the tonsils and sometimes felt in other lymph nodes throughout the body. Sometimes we are not aware of the triggers because of a more mild response from our body such as loose stools, a stuffy or runny nose, acid reflux, indigestion, and fatigue or concentration difficulties.

So why is it becoming such common practice to remove our swollen tonsils and lymph nodes when they are just a symptom to a whole body reaction? I think there needs to be a better understanding of why problems occur in the body instead of just treating symptoms. As parents, we need to be asking the question why before choosing the right treatment options. What to do then if your child has swollen tonsils? First, I would remove dairy from your child's diet. Dairy is a mucous thickener and can plug up lymph nodes when eaten in even small amounts. This is because we often lack the enzyme to breakdown dairy into small particles. This can also be done with gluten, a protein found in wheat, if symptoms do not improve or fully resolve from removing dairy. Gluten is not able to be completely broken down in all humans and when our body is already having a hard time filtering, it is best to avoid eating wheat. Children often have high levels of toxins at birth that they obtain from the mother and then are bombarded with highly processed foods before their digestive systems are fully formed. This leads to repetitive stress on the lymphatic system and can be seen with chronic congestion, ear infections, diarrhea or respiratory problems during childhood and infancy. Cooking home cooked meals with as much organic products as possible can really improve the efficiency of the lymphatic system. If the lymph nodes have been swollen for several months or years, getting a lymphatic massage can help get the lymphatic system pumping again. Chiropractic adjustments to the neck, jaw and sinus can also help improve restricted areas and help increase circulation to and around the lymphatic system. Nutritional counseling by a naturopathic medical doctor can give great advice to parents on how to start making positive changes in their children's diet.

Our children are our future and our goal should be helping them be stronger and healthier. Don't be afraid to ask questions and do your own research on treatment options for all problems.