Medical Truths Revealed!
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Breaking the Misinformation Chain

Find out the Truth about Topics Such As Autism, Alzheimer's, Hormones in Food, BPA Exposure, Artificial Sweeteners, and Much More

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SelectBooks, Inc.
New York
Dedicated to my twin brothers, Leonard and Steven, who were born severely mentally retarded. Their existence in my life has allowed me to see the truth about many things, good and bad, and has given me an immeasurable desire to make the world a better place for all children.
# Contents

**Foreword**  
ix  

**Introduction**  
1  

## I Vaccines, Autism and Environmental Toxins  
11  

1 Vaccines and Autism ... Does a Link Exist?  
13  

2 The Flu Vaccine in the 21st Century  
23  

3 Is It Possible to Reduce My Risks of Having an Autistic Child?  
29  

## II Organic Foods: The Use of Hormones, Antibiotics and Pesticides in Our Food  
37  

4 Organic Foods: Are They Really Better for Us?  
39  

5 Are There Hormones in Milk that Will Affect Me or My Child?  
49  

6 What Hormones Are Used in Meat and Are They Dangerous to Consumers?  
53  

7 Are There Antibiotics in the Food We Consume and What Are the Effects on Us?  
57  

8 Pesticides: What Are They Good For?  
61
viii  Medical Truths Revealed!

III  Sugar and Artificial Sweeteners
  9  What Is Sugar? 67
  10 What Effect Does Sugar Have on the Body? 71
  11 Is Sugar Bad for Human Consumption? 75
  12 Does Sugar Make My Child Hyperactive? 79
  13 Is Sugar Addicting? 83
  14 Are Artificial Sweeteners Safe for Me and My Child? 85

IV  Boosting Immunity and Disease Prevention 93
  15 Can I Decrease my Risk of Developing Alzheimer's Disease? 95
  16 Do Herbal Remedies Really Help to Prevent Colds and Flu? 105
  17 What Can I Do to Help Fight Off Germs? 113

V  Cell Phones and New Problems 123
  18 The Obesity Epidemic: How to Avoid Becoming a Part of the Statistic 125
  19 Cell Phones: Are They Safe? 129
  20 Are Plastics Safe Containers for Food and Beverages? The BPA Controversy 139

The Bottom Line 147
Afterword 149
Suggested Readings 153
Index 157
Foreword

O
ver the past decade or so there have been many inaccurate
claims made about doctors and modern medicine that perpetuate
medical misinformation. This includes the erroneous idea that
doctors have cures for diseases that they do not make available to
their patients. People who claim this are spreading large amounts
of unsubstantiated medical information to the public without any
true science to back it up. Since I am a physician, hearing and
reading stories about this is particularly irksome. Why would any-
body claim that a doctor would not tell a patient that there is a
cure or treatment for his or her disease? Most doctors want noth-
ing more than to make their patients well! The spreading of med-
icinal misinformation by people who claim they have a “cause” is
going more and more worrisome.

This information is coming from various sources: people trying
to make money by selling “natural remedies,” naturalists who
claim any treatment coming from western medicine is harmful,
activists who want to spread “their” word to make changes for the
better, and charlatans who take advantage of people in need by
making false claims and offers of unsubstantiated treatments. The
charlatans come in many different forms, from big industry and
small companies to famous people and book sellers. The sellers of
herbal supplements, cold and flu “remedies,” and “colonic
cleansers,” as well as many others, can also fall into this category.
Is the public supposed to accept someone’s word about important
health topics without proof or an evidence base?
I believe the public wants to know all sides of medical topics. They do not want to hear uninformed opinions, but instead want to hear hard data about such controversial topics as environmental toxins, hormones in food, vaccines and autism, prevention of Alzheimer’s, the dangers of sugar and cell phones, and the benefits of alternative medicine. For those of you who want to hear what science is saying about many of these topics, this book is for you!
Introduction

This book was inspired by my great desire to reveal the truth about the many medical issues discussed in the 21st century. These issues are often written about by non-medical people who spread information that can be incorrect, misleading, sensationalized, or just complete lies; a better word for this is medical “propaganda.” Propaganda is the giving of information to people only for the benefit of the person who is giving out the information. This is in direct contradiction to education that is the giving of information for the benefit of the person receiving the information.

The plethora of medical propaganda has pushed this misinformation chain to the point of endangering our families’ and our own health. We are bombarded with information from books, television, newspapers, magazine articles, and the Internet. It can be difficult to sift through all this information from the media to pick out the real science from junk science. As a pediatrician to thousands of patients, I have many parents who turn to me for answers to their questions about many of these health topics.

The use of the Internet has exponentially increased the delivery of information, but at what price? Anyone can start a web site to make false and unsubstantiated claims, and thousands of people now have web sites spreading their propaganda! This is one of the main reasons there is so much false information that can be extremely dangerous. If a website looks good and seems to
have been written by professionals, many people assume the information is correct. All of us need to look at information on the Internet with a discerning eye.

I have had the fortune to appear on television to discuss various medical topics with non-medical people. I have talked about lead in toys with parent health advocates and the relationship between obesity and soft drinks in schools, but the most interesting and eye opening topics are the ones that deal with vaccine issues. I have learned some important lessons when trying to talk with individuals who are involved in fighting to change vaccination policies or trying to “educate” the public about vaccines. One of the lessons is that when people have an “agenda,” they have no desire to hear what someone with a different opinion, even with medical expertise to back it up, has to say. Another lesson I have learned is that most of these people, whether from a lack of training or a lack of desire, have either false information obtained from the Internet or incomplete knowledge of the subject matter. They tend to be the types of people who want to change medical policies despite their lack of medical training. Nothing is more frustrating than trying to EDUCATE individuals when they are not interested in hearing the medical truth being revealed to them!

I have compiled many of the most controversial questions about medical issues and put together cohesive answers based on medical experience and research. The answers may seem surprising, especially if we have information ingrained in us that is not necessarily based on scientific facts but is perpetuated through the misinformation chain. This erroneous knowledge is passed on simply because we fail to continually ask questions and seek answers. If we feel comfortable with an answer to a problem, the tendency is to look no further. But the answers can change from decade to decade depending on the amount of research going on in any particular field. If we are satisfied with an answer and then stop asking questions, we may never find the truth. For those people who want to look further, the answers can be disappointing as well as reassuring or surprising.

The questions in this book are not always easily answered. There is usually more than one way to look at a problem. Many
times it can be like looking into a prism; the information scatters in many different directions. Often people try to simplify an answer, and this is a dangerous way to think. One highly emotional topic is autism and its causes. This is a perfect example of how we may simplify a very complicated issue. For example, at the present time there is no known single cause of autism; however, there are people who believe that a change in diet can “cure” autism. Autism is most likely caused by many factors. If we believe the people who are making these claims about diet without any medical studies to substantiate them, and we assume that food allergies play a major part in the etiology of autism, many parents will be given false hope. This may deter them from using much needed medically backed therapies as they try unsubstantiated “treatment” in the hope of a cure.

It is also important to identify people who participate in research that may “have an agenda.” People who work for agencies designed to protect our health, or people involved in research, may have a viewpoint that is driven by extreme emotion, power, or money. Some people work for companies funding research projects; others may have financial or emotional ties to the company without being an employee of the company. If these people cannot be objective, their information may be unreliable. Without objectivity, data cannot be interpreted properly.

Big companies may benefit or be harmed by the results of a particular research project. Some of the studies I reviewed to help answer the questions posed in this book were done by researchers who have connections to companies that either funded the studies or companies that would be affected by the results. The possibility of research bias always exists, but when money and big industry are involved, a sharp, suspicious eye is needed to review the studies.

I do not have any agenda, other than to help find the truth and to do what is best for our children. I am tired of seeing “practitioners of health” trying to sell their agendas to vulnerable people. As the medical misinformation chain is growing in leaps and bounds, their job of selling junk medicine becomes easier and easier. The “practitioners of health,” as I like to call them, are either people who do not have any credentials, or those who have limit-
ed medical credentials but insist on making medical claims without substantial research to back up their claims. They then try to “sell” the information to the public. This can be in many forms. For example, a non-medical person may write a book claiming to have “cures” for diseases that doctors are keeping from the public, an activist can make claims while attempting to change medical policies, or a company can claim to have supplements for sale claiming they help to stop the aging process. This can also be in the form of “practitioners of health” advising against getting the flu shot because it is “more dangerous than contracting the actual flu virus”! Vulnerable people, persuaded by these claims, come in all forms. People are especially vulnerable when they become parents because the fear of possible harm to their children clouds good judgment. But we all can be vulnerable to listening to those who talk a good game in spite of what 21st century science tells us.

I want to find the answers, wherever they may lead me. I am not selling a product or an ideal. I am merely trying to disperse science-backed information. Some people may not want to hear the answers to the questions in this book. They have already come to conclusions based on what they have heard on television or read in a magazine and are already convinced that they have THE answer. A parent in my practice asked me about hormones in milk. When I told her the results of my research, she very quickly said, “I don’t agree with that.” I asked what she knew about hormones and milk and where she received her information. I reminded her that she was not reading any medical studies on this topic, that she knew little about the digestive system of humans and how hormones work, but was instead listening to a newscaster on TV or reading an article written by a journalist. I had to explain to a very intelligent woman, that she was getting her information from the misinformation chain. She immediately understood what I was talking about and was willing to take what I said as the truth.

The chapters in this book will not be the end of the story. They are merely a stepping stone to finding an answer that is based on research and professional experience and NOT from the misinformation chain.
Who Are the “Practitioners of Health”?

As I have stated, these are people who have limited or no knowledge of medicine or disease, yet attempt to treat all sorts of ailments with their “protocols” or make medical accusations without research to back up their claims. Complementary and alternative medicine practices (CAM) are becoming more popular as people look to find answers outside of western medicine. Complementary therapies are used as an adjuvant to mainstream therapies in the form of helping to control symptoms or enhance well being. Some of the complementary therapies have proven to be safe and effective and have become integrated into mainstream medicine. Alternative therapies, on the other hand, are offered as alternative treatments to mainstream medicine. Using unproven therapies as a replacement for conventional treatment is usually a dangerous scenario, although there are some alternative therapies outside of conventional medicine that may have some efficacy, especially in the form of benign nutrient supplementation.

However, there are two important factors to consider when using CAM therapy. The first is to make sure you are working with a reputable CAM practitioner, and the second is to make sure your conventionally trained physician knows what alternative therapy you may use. It is difficult for pediatricians to condone alternative treatments, in the form of herbal remedies, because little data exists to prove that these therapies work, especially for children. Because there is no standardization of herbal remedies, children (adults also) could be exposed to dangerous contaminants that cause severe reactions. It is much safer to use FDA regulated and approved therapies because we know what we are getting when we take an FDA regulated medication, we know what we are treating, and we are aware of the side effects.

People with cancer are particularly vulnerable to alternatives outside of standard medicine. If you were diagnosed with cancer, how many of you reading this book would be willing to go to an alternative health professional rather than seek out a trained physician to guide you to the best surgeon and oncology doctors? The problem occurs when the limits of Western medicine are
reached and people feel the need to look somewhere else. I empathize greatly with these people because it only makes sense to try everything in an attempt to be healed. The problems I encounter are with the endless medical imposters who claim they want to help, use lots of non-researched backed treatment, and make a lot of money doing it.

There are many practitioners who are willing to take advantage of a person’s adverse situation to make a great deal of money. I am certainly not trying to say that all people who are not conventionally trained in medicine are charlatans. I want to make people more aware of what to look for when they are seeking medical advice outside the realm of conventional medicine and to know when the situation is hurting rather than helping them.

Thank goodness I have not been in a situation where my children or family were not responding or being treated successfully with Western medicine. But for the past two decades I have seen other people search for unconventional help. Most of the time their experience was unsuccessful and costly.

A very dear friend of mine gave me insight into the minds of people who are in desperate need of medical help after trying all the conventional medical avenues. She had been suffering from severe back pain for years, had multiple back surgeries, and was on a host of pain killers. Unfortunately, she was still in pain and the pain killers made her depressed and tired, a bad situation for a young woman. A friend told her about a wonderful “therapist” who helped her with her back pain by using a special massage technique. So my friend had to try it. She showed up at the house of an older couple where the gentleman was going to be the one to treat her. She was told to get completely undressed and to lie down on his massage table. He started to massage her with the usual massage technique. There was nothing unusual at first, but as he continued to massage her, she realized he was massaging every inch of her body, which was not the standard massage technique. This was being done while the man’s wife was in the kitchen cooking. This sounded like something out of a movie with a bad ending.

When she told me the story I could not believe it and asked her
if she was going crazy. Her response was a very poignant and insightful one. She said, “When you are in pain, emotional or physical, you’ll try anything to get help and if someone tells you that drinking cat urine will help you, you’ll drink the cat urine.” Being in a situation of pain, fear, anxiety, or illness can lead people to go against their better judgment and try a “remedy” that will cure them, alleviate pain, and end their suffering. I have since seen many people on the brink of “drinking cat urine” to get help for their child. I was glad to be there to offer help to them. I am being dramatic here, but some of the remedies that have been given to my patients were not only shockingly useless but potentially harmful.

Of course there are good complementary therapies that are used in conjunction with conventional medicine. They include mental health support and development, yoga, acupuncture, and massage. These are generally very helpful and may also be great stress relievers, which we know from experience can help to decrease symptoms of disease.

There are some parents in my practice who are suspicious of conventional medicine but still take their children to me for illnesses and yearly evaluations. I remember one parent who sought out the opinion of an “alternative doctor” for her son’s illness. Her son was a healthy child but had come down with a sore throat and temperature. The alternative doctor evaluated my patient, diagnosed him with strep throat without a throat culture and sold the mother an herbal “cure.” The total for the visit was over $300.00. The mother was concerned about the diagnosis of strep and decided to come to see me to elucidate things. She explained the scenario to me, and now it was my job to help her son. I examined her son, did a throat culture, and diagnosed him with a viral sore throat. I then explained to the mother that no doctor can diagnose strep throat without a throat culture (unless the patient has scarlet fever) and if he did think her son had a strep infection it is unacceptable not to give him antibiotic treatment. The danger of untreated strep throat includes rheumatic fever, kidney disease, throat abscess, and even death, all of which should not occur with the proper use of antibiotics. The mother responded that I “was
confusing her” and she did not know who to believe! Now I must
tell you that having a medical degree as well as practicing pedi-
atrie medicine for the past twenty years makes me capable of
diagnosing the cause of a simple sore throat in a child. It was also
bothersome to know that this irresponsible “doctor” received over
$300.00 for his services. I tried to explain to the mother that she
was being taken advantage of because of her desire to avoid antibi-
otics. In this particular circumstance, the “doctor” pretended to
make a diagnosis of strep throat to sell her some ridiculous prod-
uct that she believed would help her son while at the same time
avert the use of antibiotics.

Parents of children diagnosed with autism are particularly vul-
nerable to people claiming they have the next new cure for autis-
tic children. I have many patients in my practice who have been
diagnosed with some form of developmental delay, and of course
the parents would do anything to help their child. My overall feel-
ing about complementary therapies for autism is that if it does not
harm the child, I am willing to try most things. But I will never
give a family false hope. If they hear that a milk-free diet is help-
ing children with autism, I will not stop them from a dietary
change. I do tell them not to get their hopes up. There are doctors
popping up all over the place claiming they can help children with
autism. The people who are helping autistic children the most are
the wonderful, caring team of therapists who spend their days
teaching these children. The neurologists and developmental spe-
cialists are also instrumental in the care of these children. They
do not make claims about the cause of autism, such as food aller-
gies, metal poisoning, or an environmental toxemia, but instead
perform a medically targeted work-up that may include blood
work or imaging procedures. The doctors to be wary of are the
ones who require hundreds of dollars for a consultation, then
more money to do a non-medically targeted work-up on blood or
urine to try to find an abnormal lab value or an environmental
toxin. They then ask for additional money for the treatments they
want to sell you. It is very likely that one day we will identify
many environmental toxins that may cause autism when a devel-
oping fetus is exposed to them; the genetic material of a person
will probably be what determines how much and which toxins will increase susceptibility to a future diagnosis of autism. For now it is better to avoid putting you and your child through unproven testing or treatment unless you are part of an academic study run by a reputable institution.