

## Selling Your Child's Health to the Drug Companies

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Last Updated Thursday, 24 April 2008

Stevie, like all new babies occasionally got sick. His mom gave him children's pain reliever to stop his fevers and other medicines to stop his coughs, diarrhea, and rashes. Stevie's pediatrician also prescribed antibiotics for his ear infections.

At age 4, Stevie was outside playing with his cousin and tripped and fell, hitting his head on the sidewalk. He ran crying to his mom who gave him two baby aspirin. She held and comforted him and explained that the aspirin would make his pain better. She continued to give him aspirin over the next four years whenever his headaches returned.

At age 8, Stevie fell out of a tree and injured his back. He was now old enough to know the procedure to feel better. So he went straight home to his mother who gave him two junior pain relievers. She smiled as she explained to Stevie that he was now a big boy and could have stronger medicine to fix his pain. Stevie continued to take junior pain reliever whenever his back hurt or when he had a headache.

When Stevie was 13, he hurt his shoulder in the first round of the little league playoffs. Stevie was devastated because the ibuprofen he had been taking was not helping. His coach, who Stevie admired very much, suggested to Stevie's parents that a pain shot would allow him to pitch in the final game. Stevie got the shot and his team won. His parents smiled at each other as they sat in the stands, commenting on the wonders of modern medicine.

By this point in Stevie's life, he has learned that every time he has pain, he can count on drugs to numb him and the people whom he loves and trusts the most (his parents, doctor and coach) have reinforced this concept. And like most kids, Stevie watches hundreds of hours of drug commercials that program him to think that drugs fix pain.

During Stevie's 17th year, he doesn't make the high school baseball team because of his chronic shoulder problem, and his girlfriend dumps him. Where do you think Stevie turns to numb his pain? Stevie's parents are devastated to learn of their son's drug problem, not understanding that they have spent the past 17 years programming him to do this very thing.

Now Steve is 35. After his third time in rehab, he has successfully kicked his drug habit. In the meantime, he has had two shoulder surgeries and one back surgery. He suffers from migraines, insomnia, acid indigestion and will soon need medication to control his high blood pressure. His doctor attributes his failing health to the aging process, but in reality, Steve is paying the price for improper health care when he was young. For example: rather than encouraging the development of Steve's biological defenses, he was given drugs to suppress his body's natural reactions, i.e. fevers, colds, flues and rashes. And rather than correcting the physical damage to his neck, back and shoulder from his injuries, he was given drugs to mask the pain.

If Steve's parents and doctors would have treated his childhood illnesses and injuries properly, the odds are he would still be in his prime and probably looking forward to many more years of playing baseball. More importantly had he not been programmed as a child to use drugs but rather had the opportunity to experience true problem solving methods, the odds of his abusing drugs as a teenager may have been greatly reduced.

After practicing twenty years, I have heard stories like Steve's hundreds of times. And in many cases the stories are more tragic.

A recent study by Medco Health Solutions revealed that prescription drug use in children has increased dramatically in the past few years. Common long-term treatment with medication includes asthma, allergies, depression and hyperactivity. Unfortunately these medications do nothing to affect healing of these conditions and come with many side effects. Another alarming concern is that these medications being used more and more on children were originally designed to be used on adults. The safety of their use on children has never been established. In fact, very few studies of any medications have even been done on children.

A study that was done on Ritalin by the federal government's National Toxicology Program in 1995 seems to have gone unnoticed. This study sends a strong warning that Ritalin may cause cancer. Samuel Epstein, professor of occupational and environmental health, University of Illinois Medical Center in Chicago has been quoted as saying "It would be prudent for HHS (The Department of Health and Human Services) to discourage doctors from prescribing Ritalin, especially in the absence of an explicit warning about the cancer risk." Why have we not heard more about this on the news? This is just one example of the drug companies power to control the media. I believe that if this finding were on a natural remedy, the media would have given it more attention.

It is my opinion that the proper (or improper) handling of a child's illness has the potential to impact that child for the rest of his/her life. Using drugs to treat illness is mostly counterproductive except in life threatening situations, which are rare. Dispensing medications of any kind to children may adversely affect their health and potentially help program them to abuse drugs. There are many safe and effective alternative treatments for most childhood illnesses.

I have been doing drug free treatment on children for over 25 years. It has been very rewarding to watch my own children and my young patients grow up to be far healthier than their peers. Most of the health problems that their peers face did not exist in generations past.