

# Top Questions from the Pediatrician Interview

By Dr. Edmond Sarraf | MD, Homeopath



Autism, Allergies, Asthma, Anxiety, Atopic Dermatitis, ADHD.... those are just a few of the 'As' I hear about almost daily from concerned parents in my pediatric practice. Unfortunately, I do not believe the families I serve are suffering from mass panic or hysteria – I believe these are very real problems, and parents need to be aware and attuned to the latest health news, even if it sometimes provokes anxiety.

The plain truth is that chronic disease has skyrocketed in the past few decades. Instead of getting healthier with the incredible technological innovations scientists are producing almost every day, we are getting sicker. Yes, on average today's adults are living longer than ever before, but our children are the first generation in two centuries expected to live shorter lives than their parents. Although childhood obesity and Type 2 Diabetes receive the most media attention, the incidence of other chronic childhood diseases including food allergies, asthma and even childhood cancers are also on the rise.

Recently, I had the opportunity to attend the world premiere of a documentary called "Unacceptable Levels." While not in wide-release in theaters, the movie chronicles the dangers we are exposed to daily, from

genetically modified organisms, toxins in cosmetics, unsustainable and pesticide-fuelled modern farming practices, heavy metals, pharmaceuticals and other pollutants in our water – and how industry and politics control what we are allowed to know and what we are exposed to each and every day. While it was easy to watch the movie, the message was hard to swallow.

Aren't we all busy enough already? How are we supposed to study every product in our homes to decide if they are safe for our families? Well, after watching this film, I am determined to try – and I strongly recommend that you watch the movie and become more aware of the changes you can make in your life to protect

yourself, your children and your loved ones.

Although it is perhaps more difficult to live a healthy lifestyle in today's fast-paced society, you can still have a significant influence over your own well-being. Many people have asked me about the skyrocketing rate of autism over the years, and my simple answer is that MOST autism risk factors likely start during pregnancy, when the fetus is developing. The link to autism and pollution is in the news now, and this known risk factor was just published this month in the journal "Environmental Health Perspectives." Other known risk factors



that may play significant roles in autism and other disorders are brain fetal antibodies or heavy metals such as mercury, aluminum, cadmium and arsenic. Few people know that you can get tested quickly and easily using hair, saliva, urine or blood to see what your toxic load is right now.

By now, most of us know our food is not all created equal, and because of environmental toxins and nutrient depletion in soils, it is essential to try even harder to buy and eat only organic, non-GMO foods that are grown locally whenever possible. The fish, fruits, vegetables, and especially the grains we eat today were grown and cultivated very differently in previous generations, and our current farming practices may well contribute to the skyrocketing chronic disease states we have today.

If you are pregnant or thinking about getting pregnant, the time to prepare your body for a healthy pregnancy and take action is now. Read about organophosphates and heavy metals and their possible roles in 'Leaky Gut Syndrome.' Read about the dangers of gluten. Think about what is in the products you use on your skin. Learn which companies disclose and do research on the chemicals in their products, and support them with your buying power. You will be shocked to know that there is very little oversight to all this in the industry and government.

Of course, all of these things will still be important once your child is born. But more and more research is proving that epigenetics – basically, the changes in gene expression caused by mechanisms other than what's coded in your child's underlying DNA – is just as important as your DNA, if not more. Many of the sources of toxins

and pollution I mentioned above can cause changes in the epigenetic messages our children's growing bodies receive even before they are born.

Of course, once you welcome your newborn, keeping them well becomes vitally important. The roles of probiotics, vitamins D and C, and omega oils are critical at different stages, either to prevent disease or to optimize health. The preventative "wellness" model also incorporates a slew of practitioners who focus on different aspects of your care and may include nutritionists, chiropractors, craniosacral therapists, yoga, massage, neurofeedback and reiki practitioners, energy workers, doulas, and acupuncturists.

It is time to take charge of your health, and the sooner you get started, the better!



*Founder of the So. Cal Integrative Wellness Center, Dr. Edmond Sarraf, a medical doctor and clinical homeopath, incorporates nutrition, homeopathy, herbal remedies and more in the primary management of his pediatric patients. His center also employs several alternative therapists that investigate and treat the causes of a variety of disorders from an integrative perspective, focusing on a 'wellness approach' from infancy to adulthood.*