

# The Wellness Family

Dr. Fairchild Keeps You Informed

## The Ritalin Response

"I only want to do what's right for my children." That's what every parent says when faced with a difficult decision. When a child is struggling in school, their grades are falling and they're having trouble concentrating, a parent wants to do what's best. When the doctor first says, "I believe your child is suffering from ADHD. I'm recommending Ritalin," it seems like that's the natural course of action. Would you be pleased to know that it's not? The truth is there are alternatives; you don't have to put your child on drugs.

### **Ritalin Campaign**

You can look at magazines, commercials and all kinds of printed material and see that there is a mass-media campaign in action. CHADD (Children and Adults with ADHD) and similar organizations are trying to sell the idea that ADHD is a *common disease*, with Ritalin as its only cure, and it seems to be working.

- In 1990 there were about 900,000 children taking Ritalin,
- Today that number is somewhere between 4 and 5 million.
- Over 90% of all Ritalin prescriptions are written here in America – more than five times the rest of the world combined.

What most people are not aware of is that CHADD has received funds from the manufacturers of Ritalin, which does more than just create an appearance that their message is compromised. In fact, with the organization having received close to \$1 million it's clear that their message *is* compromised.<sup>1</sup> Yet, the Ritalin campaign is obviously succeeding.

### **Why not Ritalin?**

Maybe you're wondering why the big fuss; if the drug is working then why not use it? A recent study showed that Ritalin has a more potent effect on the brain than cocaine. Using brain imaging, scientists have found that, in pill form, Ritalin occupies more of the neural transporters responsible for the "high" experienced by addicts than injected cocaine.

Dr. Nora Volkow, psychiatrist and imaging expert at Brookhaven National Laboratory in Upton, New York, who led the study, said that Ritalin injected into the veins as a liquid rather than taken as a pill, produced a

rush that "addicts like very much". She said, "They say it's like cocaine."<sup>2</sup>

In fact, the researchers were shocked to discover that the average dose normally administered to children blocked 70% of the dopamine transporters, which is 20% more than cocaine.



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### **Ritalin Effects**

The next question we must ask ourselves is, what is this drug really doing to our children? What kind of effect is this going to have on the child that has been taking this drug for an extended period of time?

#### **Short Term Effects**

- **Cardiovascular** – rapid heart beat, high blood pressure, unusual heart rhythm, even heart attack
- **Central Nervous System** – altered mental status, hallucinations, depression, excitement, convulsions, drowsiness, insomnia, irritation, hostility, unhappiness, tics, nervous habits, obsessive-compulsive behavior, depression
- **Gastrointestinal** – eating disorders, nausea/vomiting, stomach ache,
- **Other** – blurred vision, headache, dizziness, blood disorders, bed wetting, fever, joint pain, unusual sweating
- **Withdrawal and Rebound** – worsening of ADHD-like symptoms, depression, insomnia, evening crash, over-activity and irritability

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### Long Term Effects

- **Depression** – studies suggest that Ritalin use in preteen children may lead to depression later in life
- **Neural System** – a short-circuit of the brain's "reward system" makes it difficult to experience pleasure
- **Emotional Response** – chronic exposure to Ritalin leads to decreased sensitivity to reward stimuli while resulting in increased negative responses to aversive situations
- **Career** – children who have taken a psychotropic, psycho-stimulant drug after the age of 12 are ineligible for military service
- **Death** – between 1990 and 2000 there were 186 deaths from Ritalin reported to the FDA MedWatch program (a voluntary reporting scheme), the numbers of which probably represent no more than 10 to 20% of the actual occurrence<sup>3</sup>

### Options

The head of the National Institute of Mental Health says that his organization is "concerned about improper diagnosis of ADHD."<sup>1</sup> This means that at least a portion of those 4 to 5 million users don't have to be taking Ritalin at all; and what CHADD and similar organizations don't want you to know is that there are equally effective treatments out there that do not include chemicals.

A study done at Harvard Medical School, in their neuropsychology post-graduate program, tested twenty children who had been diagnosed with ADHD. Ten were treated with Ritalin and the other ten were treated with dietary supplements. Tests revealed that the subjects in *both groups* showed significant and essentially *identical* improvements.<sup>4</sup>

Studies suggest that a majority of the neurological symptoms attributed to ADHD can be effectively attributed to other causes including:

- food and additive allergies,
- heavy metal toxicity and other environmental toxins
- low-protein/high-carbohydrate diets,
- mineral imbalances and/or deficiencies
- thyroid disorders and
- vitamin deficiencies.

When treated with dietary supplements that are a mixture of vitamins, minerals, and other essential acids that attempt to address the ADHD biochemical risk factors, studies support the effectiveness of food supplement treatment as a safer alternative to Ritalin.

### In Summary

Ritalin is not the answer. The evidence shows that the dangers of Ritalin essentially outweigh any possible benefit.

Peter R. Breggin, M.D., wrote "Talking Back to Ritalin: What doctors aren't telling you about stimulants for children." "Every parent who has a child that has been diagnosed with ADD/ADHD should read this book before being pressured into drugging their children by teachers, family members or physicians."<sup>5</sup>

For more information:

[www.breggin.com](http://www.breggin.com)  
[www.mothering.com](http://www.mothering.com)  
[www.icpa.org](http://www.icpa.org)

1. The Ritalin Outrage by Nicholas Regush
2. Ritalin: This Children's Drug is More Potent Than Cocaine by Jean West
3. [www.adhdfrac.org/commentary/1-6-02-2.htm](http://www.adhdfrac.org/commentary/1-6-02-2.htm)
4. Altern Med Rev 2003 (Aug); 8(3): 319-330
5. Talking Back to Ritalin by Peter Breggin

Dear Parent,

*Dr. Fairchild is dedicated to providing you with the absolute best in family wellness care. Along with that dedication comes an understanding that an informed parent makes wise decisions for their child. Don't forget to take a moment to ask Dr. Fairchild any questions that you may have regarding your family's overall wellness.*

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