

Welcome back to the Wellness column-we hope you had a great week!

Last week we discussed the importance of hydration and we are wondering how you did? If you are already a strong water drinker-excellent-if not, every day is a new opportunity to work on this vital behavior! A dehydrated body is a weak body and more susceptible to infection and malfunction. When you supply your body the H₂O that it needs for sufficiency, you are much more likely to stay well and feel better, have more energy and a stronger immune system.

This week, we'd like to discuss MOVEMENT as it relates to brain function.

Have you ever noticed how your kids get cranky or unfocused after sitting still for a period of time? TV, video games and other electronics that promote a sedentary life style are really wreaking havoc on our children's brains and its development. It wasn't until recent times that neurologists thought that once we reached adulthood our brain stopped growing and developing. We now understand that the brain continues to lay down neurological pathways and connections all through out our life and this is especially important as kids develop their brains from in 0-25 years. What is necessary for this growth and development? You are right; movement-it's an essential nutrient for life!

The brain literally GROWS with MOVEMENT and shrinks when we are sedentary. That's right; you can help your child get smarter by encouraging movement! Little kids are growing their brains very rapidly, hence their constant need for movement and when we make them sit still for too long or keep them occupied with TV or iPads, we are hindering their brain development and neurological growth. This is innate and the reason why you can't keep a toddler still for more than 20 seconds at a time! Studies show that when kids start their day with movement, they do better in school; they have better focus, are happier in general and can therefore perform at a higher level. The worst thing to do when a child is unruly is to make him sit still! Send the child out to run laps around the house or school building. If the ground is covered with snow and ice, throw a mattress on the floor in a corner of the house and have him jump for 3-5 minutes. You'll be surprised how this recharges the brain and helps the child refocus. Get creative; teach them to notice how movement actually energized them and calms them down at the same time. If a child is cranky, ask him (or her of course) "when was the last time you really moved your body?" and then encourage him to get moving. They are smart, oh so smart and this is a lesson for life; you cannot be a complete and healthy human being without proper movement. Your mind, body and soul depend on it!

Have a great week and get moving!

The wellness committee