

Wesley (age 12) was tested at an early age for celiac disease and cow's milk allergy. Both tests were negative. Still, he benefits greatly from a gluten-free and dairy-free diet.

When I got pregnant at the age of 34, I knew immediately that I wanted everything to be as natural as possible. Giving birth at home, without pain management, breastfeeding, etc. That's not always up to you. Wesley announced himself in November 2007, after 36 weeks and 5 days of pregnancy, 2 days too early to deliver at home. Otherwise it was a successful delivery, without pain control and accompanied by my own midwife.

Rather shortly after delivery, she shared her suspicion that Wesley has DS. I still remember my first thought: "Oh, luckily, nothing medical..." (what did I know). Since Wesley pretty much just slept and didn't drink (breast, bottle, cupfeeding, tried everything), he was tube fed from the second day.

Thanks to the book "Eating for little ones - from breast to sandwich" by Stefan Kleintjes, I knew that breastfeeding is possible in 95% of cases, but not always easy. So I did start pumping right away. After a month and with the help of a lactation consultant, I managed to breastfeed Wesley for the first time. Every feeding it was exciting whether he could remember how to do it. Sometimes it took 45 minutes before it worked again. I also had to keep pumping after feedings because his suction was not strong enough to maintain breastfeeding. After 12 weeks, Wesley made it without a tube, but I did have to supplement him with the pumped milk through the bottle to the maximum extent. I also had a scale to check his weight before and after feeding and to supplement with formula if necessary. So it was a very intensive period. After six months it became easier. Wesley ended up breastfeeding for 2 years, so it was worth the perseverance!

Healthy eating was always important to me. I never gave Wesley candy and we eat organic as much as possible. We had been doing that for years.

From the time Wesley was about 2 years old, he became picky with food. From one day to the next he started refusing many things that he previously liked. We started offering pureed meals, to make sure he kept eating a variety of foods and got to know all the flavors. We kept that up for over 3 years. Gradually he started to get interested in meat and fish again. And eventually we also stopped puréeing overnight.

When Wesley was 5, I read the book "OERsterk" by Richard de Leth. I then started eating grain-free and dairy-free myself. To my surprise, I noticed after just 1 week that my eczema started to heal. I had been suffering from that for years. I told a friend, who has type 2 diabetes. He got into it and after a short period of trying it out, he was able to cut the amount of insulin he injected in half. I got curious and wondered what it would do for Wesley?

When we received confirmation a few days after his birth that Wesley had DS, the doctor mentioned in the same breath the likelihood of heart defects, bowel obstruction and thyroid problems. I had accepted Down syndrome immediately, but the thought that he would have to go through life with so many health problems frightened me and I found it very sad. At the hospital I was also given a list of diseases and the increased risk in people with DS. That did not make me happy either. After all, people without DS can get any disease that exists, but we don't think about that on a daily basis either. After trying the OER (PALEO) diet, I wondered to what extent these conditions in DS are caused by the extra chromosome, or whether factors such as nutrition play a role in their development. (I later learned that this is the science of Epigenetics) People with DS have narrower ear canals, etc., but does that necessarily mean they should always be inflamed?

When Wesley was about 5.5 years old, I started gradually changing his diet to gluten-free and dairy-free. That was quite a challenge, since (spelt) bread with cheese (admittedly organic), pancakes and pasta were his favorite foods. I started baking banana bread with coconut flour and almond flour. Pancakes became banana or pumpkin omelets. And pasta can also be made from zucchini or carrot.

The results came gradually, but were incredible! After a few months, my husband noticed that he had been carrying the same handkerchief for Wesley for a week. Previously, Wesley suffered from runny noses all year round. He had ear tubes due to fluid behind his eardrums and in the winter he had ear infections and a runny ear very often. At night he usually woke up 3 times. The runny noses and ear infections disappeared, he started to sleep and hear better and this also helped with his cognitive development. Supervisors noticed independently and without knowing about our dietary changes, that Wesley suddenly improved so much.

But what I found most remarkable was the new school photo (see below) six months after starting the OER (PALEO) diet, compared to the school photo a year earlier. His skin is better; he always had red, chapped cheeks. But he had also gained a narrower face. He was on the BMI curve on the borderline of obese. The curve went back to an average BMI nicely over the course of 3 years.

I wanted to know and understand more about the relationship between nutrition and health. But I wasn't sure where to turn. As a teenager - with people around me who counted calories - I intuitively sensed that something was missing with diets that involved counting calories. So I didn't want to study dietetics, afraid that I would then learn calorie counting as a starting point. After advice from Richard de Leth, I started training as an Orthomolecular Therapist. Ortho = right in Greek. You go in search of the right molecular environment for optimal health. Nutrition, exercise, stress management, supplementation etc can all play a role. Then I got basic medical training. By now I also understand what is wrong with caloric science. Which assumes that every calorie metabolically does the same thing in your body and that food is just our body's fuel. But nutrition also builds our "fuel tank." In other words, "you are what you eat." Every day we create millions of

new cells. That requires the right building materials, so it does matter what you eat, to produce good cells.

In my continuing education courses "Psycho-, Neuro- Endocrinology, Immunology (PNEI - Cell Care Academy) and "Health & Wellness Coaching (A Wellness Revolution), I learned about the sciences Epigenetics, (Nutritional) Glyco-science (Glycoscience) and Neuroscience.

Not all genes are constantly on. Genes can be on or off. Epigenetics science studies the factors involved in turning genes on and off. Environmental factors such as diet, exercise, toxins, stress, thoughts, emotions, etc. can all play a role.

An extra chromosome 21 can lead to overexpression of certain genes on that chromosome, which can lead to an increased risk of certain diseases. But of interest is whether we can naturally inhibit/prevent that overexpression through choices in our environmental factors that we can influence.

In the lecture "A Wellness Journey" by Larry A Law, I learned about what has changed about our diet, about the frequent hybridization of wheat, pasteurization of milk, GMO etc. Also, there are major differences between supplements, natural, plant based versus synthetic and inorganic. In addition, Larry explains the essential role of 8 (healthy) structural sugars/glycans for our health and how these important nutrients are almost entirely lacking in our processed, modern diet. Breast milk contains many of these structural sugars/glycans, more even than protein, which might explain why it has so many health benefits over formula.

In an ideal world, dietary supplements would not be necessary, unfortunately due to soil depletion, green harvesting, etc., it is no longer possible to get all nutrients in sufficient amounts through food. In addition, due to stress and toxic load (drugs, pesticides, air pollution, etc) we have an increased need for nutrients.

After Larry's webinar and reading the booklet "A Gift Called Michelle - An Inspirational Story of Hope," about a girl Michelle with DS and her experiences with chronic health problems and glyconutrients, Wesley and I also started taking supplements in the form of plant-based, natural glyconutrients and a natural, plant-based multi of vitamins and minerals over a year and a half ago. The goal is to give our bodies all the building blocks to optimally support the body's own ability to repair/prevent disease and maintain health.

I hope that in the future there will be more scientific research in people with DS on the epigenetic factors, which can prevent and cure diseases and disorders, such as Alzheimer's, for example. The focus is now often on the genetic side of things and drug studies. In his book "Grain brain," neurologist David Perlmutter describes how toxic (modern) gluten is to the brain.

In his book "The End of Alzheimer's" by Dr. Dale Bredesen, he describes three types of Alzheimer's, with different elements at play: inflammation (from infections, diet or otherwise); a lack of nutrients, hormones and other substances that support the brain; and toxins such as heavy metals or biotoxins. He compares Alzheimer's to a house with a roof with 36 holes.

Plugging 1 hole does not help. All 36 holes (factors that can cause the brain to shrink) must be closed, and that will not be achieved by drugs alone. It is a book that gives hope that we can prevent and reverse Alzheimer's. In addition, the free downloadable e-book "New Light on Dementia" by Marieke de Vrij is worthwhile. Based on this book, I try to teach Wesley to "chill / do nothing", without screens (TV, tablet, phone) so that there will be more time and space for processing and more consideration of what was also already described in the article "Can vs. cope".

Fortunately, we do not have to wait for research in people with DS on epigenetic factors. With the above information, I hope to motivate parents/caregivers of people with DS to educate themselves on this matter. There are lectures, books, training, and in addition there are lifestyle coaches and therapists, who can help. In addition, I see that doctors are also becoming more and more interested in the role of nutrition on health, and lifestyle coaches are increasingly being reimbursed from basic insurance. We don't have to be victims of our genes, there are lifestyle choices, which influence whether or not genes are on.

It is important to realize that we are all unique, so it is a search for what nutrition is optimal for each individual. What is unambiguous, however, is that our bodies need "whole food," as nature intended, and not overly processed foods, stripped of nutrients.

Wesley is doing well. He is a cheerful, enthusiastic 12-year-old boy who enjoys sports. He is in judo and has been in athletics for many years. He has obtained swimming diplomas A, B and C and on weekends he cycles 10 km with his dad, who then goes running. He also enjoys tennis, soccer, basketball, field hockey and has started learning to box. He is also increasingly indicating that he wants to do things himself. Putting groceries on the belt himself, paying with his own debit card (the code of which he knows by heart and understands is secret) and packing groceries. Withdraw money at the ATM himself. He only takes paper and glass to the dumpster. He helps at home with cooking, setting and clearing the table.

I am convinced that healthy food and natural, plant-based supplements help contribute to his quality of life and development.

Translated with DeepL.com (free version)

More information:

Book: "A Gift Called Michelle – Ann Inspirational Story of Hope"

<https://www.amazon.com/Gift-Called-Michelle-Barbara-Desrochers/dp/097558572X>

Class: "A Wellness Journey":

<https://www.angiesoptiongrm.org/register-for-a-wellness-journey-class.html>

Book: "There's an elephant in the room" – Larry A Law

https://www.angiesoptiongrm.org/store/p54/There's_an_Elephant_in_the_Room.html

Download e-book for free: New Light on Dementia

<https://newlightondementia.com>

Health & Wellness Coaching Course – A Wellness Revolution:

<https://www.awellnessrevolution.com>

