

Introduction

It's 6:52 A.M. on a Tuesday and my four-year-old son awakes with puffy eyes. He looks like a knocked-out boxer in the post-fight press conference.

"Daddy, if I'm awake, why can't I see anything?" You've got to love toddler questions.

"Well, Gabe, I'm guessing you have pinkeye." Anyone with young kids knows it's never one-and-done with questions.

"Did I play with anything pink yesterday? Aren't my eyes brown?" Could I get orange eye 'cause that's my favorite color?"

Flash ahead two hours and we leave the eye doctor with prescription in hand. The diagnosis is not pinkeye, it's pollen allergies. The scribbled blue paper calls for ocular steroid eye drops.

Flash ahead another hour and I'm dangling the first drop over a frightened, wincing little boy. Landing the first drop will be harder than typing on a BlackBerry with your knuckles. First drop lands on his shirt. Second drop douses his forehead. Third drop cures the carpet but not my kid.

"Let's take a break before we finish the bottle." Perusing the label, I can't help but notice the warnings.

Warning #1: May cause elevated pressure inside the eye that can lead to vision damage.

Warning #2: May increase the risk of cataracts clouding the lens of the eye that can impair vision.

Whoa! I'm trying to cure the kid, not blind him! Does a 4-year-old need steroids? Didn't all those ballplayers experience back acne, bulging necks, hair loss, and anger management problems?

Maybe missing Gabe's eye was a blessing. I call Dr. Rosen, our holistic-minded pediatrician. "Try Optique, a homeopathic treatment for eye irritation. Let him lie down with his eyes closed, aim the drop at the

inner corner of the eye, and ask him to blink a couple of times.” No vision damage, no cloudy lens, no wrestling matches—count me in!

Gabe and I improve our eye drop accuracy and two days later he can see perfectly again. Welcome to the beginning of our journey from conventional to holistic parenting. Never again would my wife and I blindly fill prescriptions.

Weeks later I ran into our eye doctor at the grocery store and asked him about Optique. “Never heard of it,” he responded. “It’s a homeopathic alternative to steroid drops,” I explained. Who knew eye doctors could have such blank stares!

An Integrative Approach

The puffy eye experience changed the way my wife and I looked at doctors. We realized conventional doctors know conventional treatments but holistic parents like ourselves want the total picture. Sadly, you can’t find a holistic eye doctor, physical therapist, and gastroenterologist in every city.

Now I’m not here to tell you to ultimately pick the conventional or holistic choice. That’s your job as a loving parent. I just want you armed with credible information when you need it—mainly, the point at which a doctor hands you the prescription. We’re all busy. We all scan the internet for health information when we need it. But who wrote these articles? Is it an established medical professional or a bored, opportunistic teenager?

Meet Dr. Rosen

I’ve partnered with Dr. Lawrence Rosen, a renowned and board-certified pediatrician committed to family-centered, holistic childcare. He’s a nationally recognized expert in Pediatric Integrative Medicine and understands the full spectrum of conventional and natural treatment options. That’s the beauty of integrative medicine—it’s not either/or but the best of both. Check him and his pediatric practice out at

www.wholechildcenter.org and you'll understand why he's the right co-author for this book.

His practice is built around the Consortium of Academic Health Centers for Integrative Medicine's definition of integrative healthcare. "Integrative medicine is the practice of medicine that reaffirms the importance of the relationship between practitioner and patient; focuses on the whole person; is informed by evidence; and makes use of all the appropriate therapeutic approaches, healthcare professionals, and disciplines to achieve optimal health and healing." Not a bad philosophy for raising happy, healthy kids!

In fact, let's take a closer look at the key words that make up the definition of integrative pediatrics:

- **Relationship:** The bond and communication between pediatrician, child, and family is crucial both diagnostically and therapeutically.
- **Whole:** The mind, body, and spirit of the child are linked and need to be in balance for optimal health.
- **Evidence:** Integrative pediatricians are guided by their intuition and experience as well as research findings. They value individuality and understand that one size does not fit all.
- **Appropriate:** Risks considered safe for adults might not be safe for children. Integrative pediatricians value gentle, natural remedies whenever possible.
- **Optimal Health:** Integrative pediatricians focus on wellness and prevention with a strong belief in the innate healing capacity of children. Health is considered not just the absence of disease but also the presence of optimal functioning.

Talk about an all-encompassing approach to childcare! Bottom line: this book is not about conventional versus alternative treatments for kids. It's really integrative, discussing the pros and cons of both.

Medical and Parental Perspectives

Dr. Rosen as co-author lets you know a renowned pediatrician is fully behind the medical advice in this book. However, together we wanted to go one step beyond just medical opinions. We know parents often rely on other parents when seeking treatment recommendations.

So throughout this book we'll share the pediatric and parental perspective (both of us are loving and doting dads) on conventional versus natural treatments for kids. As the provider and receiver of treatment, we've got both viewpoints covered for you. We don't stop there! We've also enlisted advice from parents around the world on remedies they've successfully used for their kids. You'll see this in the "Parental Guidance" sidebars throughout the book.

How to Use This Book

Have you ever used an English-to-Spanish dictionary? You look up the word *table* and quickly discover it's *mesa* in Spanish. Well, think of this book as your conventional-to-natural dictionary. Here you'll find that a conventional treatment for allergies, like Benadryl, translates into a natural alternative called Sabadil.

We know you're super-busy running a household. We don't expect you to block off 72 hours and read this book cover to cover while sipping a latte and getting a foot rub from your spouse. Then again, you're probably due for a foot rub—so squeeze that in if you can.

We want to give you the exact information you need when you need it—mainly at the very point of making a medical decision for your child. So stuff this book in your diaper bag or glove compartment. Pull it out when you've got a conventional prescription in hand or a sick kid at home and want the natural alternative. You'll quickly see:

- The causes and symptoms of nearly 100 childhood ailments
- The conventional course of treatment for each ailment, including recommended dosage, active ingredients, and possible side effects

- A natural, homeopathic, and/or holistic alternative to the conventional treatment
- Two or three additional natural treatments to consider beyond the one highlighted for each ailment in the section called “Natural Selection”

For every ailment covered in this book you’ll see a table with both the associated conventional remedy and treatment alternative. You can expect to see dosage information, how it works, potential side effects, and active ingredients. As a reminder, active ingredients are the ones responsible for the given effect advertised by the medication (i.e., to reduce coughing symptoms). Active ingredients are the part of the medication that does what the product is designed to do. Inactive ingredients (which are not listed in this book’s tables) are used to create the medication’s formulation (i.e., into a liquid, capsule, or pill). The actual amount of active ingredient in a given medication is often so small that inactive ingredients are needed to bulk up the product into an easy-to-use form for the patient.

While we did not have enough room in the tables to list inactive ingredients, as the parent you should be sure to review them before choosing a product for your child. Potentially harmful dyes and chemicals can be common inactive ingredients, so you’ll want to check labels and ingredients to fully understand what your child is ingesting.

Ultimately, it’s your kid—who are we to make a medical decision for you? If this book has done its job, you’ll be armed with integrative choices to make your own informed medical decisions the next time your kid coughs, sneezes, aches, drips, limps, whimpers, itches, or cries.

What Ails Your Kid?

With nearly 100 ailments covered in this book, it can be daunting to find the right section for your child’s condition. That’s why we’ve created a twofold table of contents. First, the ailments are broken into categories,

primarily by body parts and related conditions. That's why diaper rash and teething are in Chapter 1 on Baby Matters while acne and head lice are in Chapter 9 on Dermatological Dilemmas. Second, immediately after the categories, you'll find an alphabetical listing of every ailment and the associated page number.

In the Spotlight

At the end of each chapter you'll see one additional topic covered in the "Spotlight On" section. Look for photos throughout this book highlighting these spotlighted treatments and preventative measures. The purpose here is to emphasize an integrative topic that applies to the entire chapter. For example, look for probiotics in Chapter 2 on mouth-related ailments. And be sure to check out the spotlight on mind-body medicine in Chapter 6 on tummy troubles.

Celebrity Sound Off

Each chapter also kicks off with an original quote from holistic-minded celebrities and health experts. We reached out to them directly to better understand how they apply integrative medicine in their own lives (and the lives of their kids). Within chapters, we've also included professional pointers from nationally known integrative experts.

Sidebars Explained

Your ailment journey also includes multiple sidebars providing additional tips and new ideas to help you as parents make better-informed decisions. The three sidebar types you'll see throughout this book are:



Parental Guidance

Actual quotes from parents who have effectively used various treatment alternatives to improve their child's condition.



Good to Know

Fun facts and statistics related to the conditions covered throughout the book that add scope and quantifiable data to the information presented.



Science Says

The scientific rationale explained by Dr. Rosen for each of the treatment alternatives covered in the book adds credibility to the recommendations.

At this point you understand the definition of integrative medicine. You've met Dr. Rosen. You know how to read and best use the book in front of you. All that's left is to answer one simple question. What ails you—or, more precisely, what ails your child?