

Health Reflections



Tantrums and Meltdowns

We've probably all witnessed or dealt with a toddler tantrum. We possibly even threw a few ourselves a very long time ago, before our verbal skills developed sufficiently to communicate our needs, wants, fears and frustrations in a less agonizing way. One thing's for sure – how a tantrum is executed is unique to each child, and the homeopathic treatment of any tantrum-prone toddler will take this individual expression into consideration.

Between the ages of one and five, children tend to go through a natural process of learning that we don't always get our own way – although there can be many other triggers for a tantrum. If a young child lacks better ways of communicating anger, discomfort and cause of upset, it's paramount that the adult consistently demonstrates loving ways of being clear and fair to the child.

Meltdowns need even more delicate handling. They belong to a different kettle of fish, or perhaps a different kettle of microbes that have been inadvertently brewing inside the child's gut. This imbalanced environment is often associated with GAPS conditions and autistic spectrum diagnoses. Maureen Bennie explains how using

the 'wrong' kind of response "...will only make things worse for a person having an autistic meltdown from being overwhelmed by sensory stimuli."

In an autistic context, the brain (intrinsically linked to the gut) can go into a kind

of screensaver mode. This cycle can lead to repetitive gestures or a 'stuck record' behaviour. It can be more extreme than your run-of-the-mill tantrum. Sitting it out doesn't tend to work and a parent often has to find a creative way of moving the situation along.

An increasing awareness of the gut-brain connection means that there is a *great deal* we can do to help improve the quality of these children's early life experiences. I have found that a tailored homeopathic approach together with avoiding processed foods can be positive first steps towards calm. Providing a younger child with mood-supporting foods is far easier than persuading an older child to forego pathogen-fueling, mist-inducing foods to which he has been allowed to become addicted. When improving nutrition, the sooner the better.

Lice and Worms. For those prone to tantrums as well as for those experiencing meltdowns, it's advisable to check for headlice and nits and for major overgrowth of intestinal worms. These can all exacerbate bad mood, and are best addressed holistically rather than with harsh formulas that may hurt the microbiome.

Constipation This is another common contributor to foul moods and should always be taken seriously. Untangling the root cause with homeopathy is a popular option which, unlike many quick-fix laxatives, will not counteract long-term gut health.

No Sweets The NSPCC offers solid advice to avoid sweets as a tool for tantrum-taming, with which I fully agree. Bribery at its worst doesn't foster healthy relationships, and sugar may turn into alcohol in a compromised gut. If adults appreciate how hard it can be to reason well when hungover, they may also want to reassess the availability of sweets for their young children.



THINK BEFORE YOU SPEAK ♥ READ BEFORE YOU THINK*

Ritalin Free Kids: J.R. & R. Ullman (Three Rivers Press, 2000);

Rage Free Kids: J.R. & R. Ullman (Picnic Point Press, 2003);

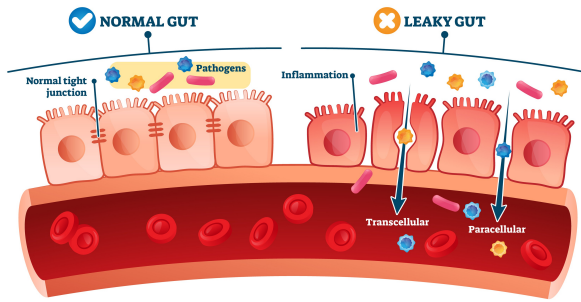
How to Cope with Tantrums: NSPCC (www.nspcc.org.uk, 2020);

Tantrum vs Autistic Meltdown: What is the Difference? Maureen Bennie (www.autismawarenesscentre.com, 2016);

Dealing with Tantrums: Jacaranda Tree (www.themotessorinotebook.com, 2020).

*Fran Lebowitz - Social Studies

LEAKY GUT



During my primary school days, my class was challenged to make a full scale model of the small intestine using rolled up newspaper. To our innocent delight, it stretched the 6 metres from the dining hall to the boys' toilets.

Nowadays, I'm the one who sets a similar challenge to my G.A.P.S. class (or the *Little Stockpots* as we call ourselves). As part of our learning we go a step further by decorating the inside of the tube with a bumpy surface, images of food particles, friendly faces and a few rogue characters.

Inside a healthy gut, the bumpy surface is formed by finger-like protrusions called villi. These lie close together and provide a cosy home for dozens of species of probiotic microbes. Together, they help us absorb food, produce neurotransmitters and support immunity. 'Friendly' microbes also protect the villi from 'cheeky rascals' – pathogenic bacteria, fungi and viruses - that could reproduce to problematic levels, given half a chance.

Many habits may alter the balance of gut microbes e.g. the use of antibiotics and steroids, the contraceptive pill, junk food and prolonged stressors. These factors are sometimes unavoidable but there are plenty of powerful, natural measures available to us all as we rebuild balanced probiotic communities. Without such efforts, unprotected villi can become inflamed and too sick to stick up as a strong team, and spaces may open up between them.

From a G.A.P.S. perspective, homemade stocks and fats are invaluable in supporting sick villi to repair themselves. Without the basic building blocks that these foods provide, a leaky gut wall may develop, allowing an unusual flow of pathogens and food particles such as gluten to slip into the bloodstream. Blood can then transport these unexpected guests up to the brain and may intoxicate it.

This is the toxic load that a G.A.P.S. child is thought to carry, with behavioural problems being but one expression of the problem. To help “heal and seal” the gut wall, we as healthcare providers, parents and food producers must support each other on this steep but rewarding learning curve.

“Heal and Seal”** with Every Meal

It seems that cholesterol-rich foods are not only back in favour with many families, but increasingly seen as essential to the sealing of a leaky gut wall. This may be especially relevant for some children with challenging or upsetting behaviour. Within a broad network of support - including homeopathic medicine, regular sunlight and outside play - dietary fats form a key part of the G.A.P.S. approach to supporting children's mental and emotional health.



****“Heal and seal”** using traditional fats is Dr Campbell-McBride's first and foremost advice for damaged guts. For further insights please read *Gut and Psychology Syndrome*.

Each Health Reflections article and blog has been written for those who wish to learn about the true meaning of health, who desire to think broadly and who are ready to take responsibility for their own personal choices. All information shared is of educational nature and should not replace medical advice. No guarantees are made regarding accuracy or completeness of content, or its applicability to any condition or personal circumstance. If you choose to implement any of the ideas or principles described, you are taking full responsibility for your actions. In times of illness, seek professional healthcare.

AUDE SAPERE – MENTRA WYBOD – DARE TO GET IT

Elin Alaw – Professional Homeopath and G.A.P.S.™ Practitioner
elinalawhomeopath@yahoo.co.uk / 07989 491 417 / www.elinalaw.com