

Local News

'Dr. Bob' wages campaign against processed foods, prescription drugs

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ELYRIA — Bob DeMaria makes it his business to steer parents away from fast food drive-through windows and to try to change their ideas about prescription drugs.

The self-described drugless health care provider and author makes statements that sound aggressive, such as "Ritalin use leads to cocaine use," or "Processed food is dead."

DeMaria uses a cable access television show, classes, a radio show, a Web site and a book to get his point across.

As proprietor of Drugless Healthcare Solutions, 362 E. Bridge St., DeMaria performs

chiropractic procedures, guides his patients through detoxification and provides nutritional guidelines.

He said he gets patients to stop taking prescription drugs and eating processed food, a factor he said can especially make a difference in hyperactivity for children.

DeMaria blames a rushed culture for the glut of fast food being consumed by kids.

"If you drive through McDonald's and buy them chicken nuggets, instead of a burger, you think you're doing better," he said, quickly launching into an animated explanation. DeMaria maintains a belief that foods with "bad fats," fast food chick-

en nuggets in particular, are responsible for turmoil in a child's brain.

DeMaria displays a lot of enthusiasm and an urgency when talking about fast food chicken nuggets. It was one of the first things he brought up when speaking about his nutritional philosophy.

The "bad fat," according to DeMaria is hydrogenated fat, or "trans fat."

He said he wants his patients to cut out fast food and prepackaged snacks from their diet, which he insisted will make a marked difference in their overall health.

Growing up in the '50s and '60s, fast food meals were few

and far between for DeMaria. He said that way of life is better than the fast food nation of to-



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Bob DeMaria holds two of his more popular products in the vestibule of his office in Elyria. DeMaria says that the lack of this oil is one of the things responsible for people feeling chronic pain.

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"I was born in 1954. What we do in our house is what we did in the '50s or '60s," he said. "No soda and we make our own food."

DeMaria shuns the term "new age."

"It's not new age, it's just getting back to basics," he said emphatically. "Processed food is devoid of minerals."

Flax oil is the component missing from many people's diets, DeMaria said. He offers flax oil in bottles to his patients.

DeMaria has included his own recipe for chicken nuggets in his book, "STOP ADHD, ADD, ODD Hyperactivity." The chapter devoted to food preparation is called "Hype-Free Irresistible Recipes," and includes instructions for making broccoli cheese frittata (the "cheese" is soy or rice cheese), dairyless alfredo sauce, herbed veggie gravy and enchilada bake.

Many of the recipes call for soy products and tofu.

Another chapter in the book comes out swinging at sweeteners.

Refined sugar will cause sugar highs and crashes, and will also strip away B vitamins, according to DeMaria. He suggests sweet-

eners like brown rice syrup and brands like Devansoy or Stevia to eliminate the high and subsequent crash.

Writing the book grew out of a 45-page booklet that DeMaria put together for a patient three years ago.

"In my practice, my patients follow my dietary guidelines," he said. "People knew the I knew a lot about the role of diet. I put together a booklet, and the patient said, 'This should be a book.'"

DeMaria said his book is the only one he knows of that makes the connection between hydrogenated fats and hyperactivity.

So, how to enjoy a normal life while intensely tracking every molecule that is consumed?

Two families said they have found a way to do it, after meeting with DeMaria.

Patty Hale of North Ridgeville said her son, Jesse, was cranky as a toddler, and increasingly hyper as a 9-year-old child. People told Hale her son was bad and should be on medication. She resisted, and looked for a different solution.

Hale heard about "Dr. Bob," as DeMaria's patients know him, on the radio and signed up to go to "Half Hour of Health," an informational program by DeMaria,

offered every Thursday evening at his office.

Soon after, Hale got to work throwing all the processed food in the house into garbage bags.

"We threw out all the poison in our house," Hale said. "We had big garbage bags of chips, chocolate and snacks."

Hale said she noticed a "drastic change" in her son a few weeks later.

"His mood changed, his focus changed, his self-esteem changed," she said.

But keeping up with strict dietary guidelines isn't easy, Hale said.

"He had a sweet tooth, and he loved ice cream, so it was hard, but he was a trooper," she said of her son.

One of the sacrifices of following DeMaria's diet comes in the form of birthday parties with her extended family, Hale said.

"At birthday parties, people think we're being cruel," she said. "But we're trying to keep him from pain."

Exceptions are sometimes made, and Jesse can have half a piece of cake, or a glass of soda at parties, Hale said.

Another patient of DeMaria, 18-year-old Ryan Hale (no relation to Patty), said the medica-

tions he was on weren't working. Hale and his mother heard about "Dr. Bob" through the Church on the North Coast.

"I was on lethal doses of Prozac and Lithium every day, and the meds weren't working," Hale said, listing several maladies, including bouts of pneumonia, a bad attitude and a skin condition.

"I used to be the wild kid, running around the church," Hale said. After changing his diet, stopping medications and taking vitamin supplements, he said he experienced "a major 180."

DeMaria focuses not only on nutrition in his practice, but also on the problem of what he calls a "drug oriented society."

He said he believes in "hugs, not drugs."

"I love seeing people not being played by the pharmaceutical industry, which tries to make everybody chemically dependent," he said, adding that his detractors may be "afraid of change."

DeMaria said his future plans include writing another book, tentatively titled "Stopping Cancer Before it Stops You," continuing with his Web site, drugless-care.com, and starting a new health series at his office called "Just Tell Me What to Do."