

A 14-year search for help

Amy wanted desperately to help her older son, but didn't know where to turn

Nathan started life as a happy, easy baby, but at around 18 months, the same time he stopped breastfeeding, his parents began to see changes for the worse. He would lash out at other children, hitting and even biting them for no apparent reason. "By the time he was two," Amy recalls, "I had to stop taking him to the playground and continued to keep him away from other children for about a year."

His aggression toward his younger brother began at about age 5. Nathan managed to keep his behavior in check while he was at kindergarten, but when he got home, little brother Max would feel the brunt of his negative behaviors; Nathan was constantly "picking at" the toddler.

For most of his school years, Nathan slid through the cracks. He was in a gifted program but performed well below what his teachers knew was his potential.

"Finally, in seventh grade," Amy recalls, "things started to slide downhill quickly, and we began to hear the term 'ADD.' (I now recall that this was also the time I started using scented wax warmers throughout the house.) Nathan began taking Concerta, and while it helped reduce the symptoms, we were continually having to increase his dose. What's more, in the evening when the effects of the drug wore off, the behavior problems accelerated."

"Each morning, I woke up with a knot in my stomach, worrying about my son. I was 'an anxious mess' and spent a lot of time crying."

There were several nightmare weeks at the beginning of this summer when Nathan came off the Concerta. And things reached a crisis point after Amy returned from having been out of town. Before she left, she stocked the kitchen with lots of convenience food -- filled with the additives the U.S. Food and Drug Administration claims are harmless! Nathan's persistent pestering of his brother was worse than ever. Although Max, Amy's younger son, didn't have behavior or learning problems, he suffered from asthma, allergies and migraine headaches. After a steady diet of junky food, Max developed a migraine so severe it triggered a major nose bleed.



It's been only four weeks since they changed their diet, but things are looking bright for this family!

With school only a few weeks away, Amy wanted to get Nathan started on his medicine, but now at nearly 16 years old, he was fed up with the pills and told his mom he didn't want to take them anymore. Determined to find a way to support Nathan's wish to be off medicine, Amy started a computer search for alternative ways to help ADD. She had recently met a mom whose daughter had a terrific response to the Feingold Diet, so she recognized the Association's web site.

Amy ordered the member package and told the family they would all change their food to healthier options. Husband Jon was agreeable, as was 9-year-old Hayley. Max supported anything that might stop the constant harassment, and Nathan was eager to find something better than drugs.

It was only a few days later when Amy was sure she saw calmer, quieter behavior in Nathan, but she felt it could just be wishful thinking. It was Max who convinced her that the changes were real. "Mom, I really like this diet," he commented. Not only had Nathan stopped picking on his brother, but they were now able to hang out and enjoy being together.

Amy now recognizes that the severe reactions she has suffered after eating out in some restaurants are due to the MSG used by so many of them.

They recently used the Feingold Association's *Fast Food Guide* to find a great restaurant and celebrate Nathan's 16th birthday.