

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

DMG: cancer fighter, not carcinogen

To the Editor:

I have a 28-month-old son diagnosed with autism and considered high functioning. I started him on DMG on May 31, with the following results:

—Within three days he started sleeping through the night again (which he hadn't done for a month before).

—His teachers at an early intervention program (two hours a week), who are unaware of his intake of DMG, have commented on his increased eye contact and say that he stays on task longer, he's calmer at group time, and [exhibits] increased verbalization.

—He amazed his aunt and uncle by greeting them with a smile and running to them.

—I have noted an increase in vocabulary from 10 to about 50 words.

—In the month that we tried DMG, I don't recall any tantrums at all.

I stopped using DMG on July 2 after reading an article which strongly suggests that this product may be carcinogenic.

The first day without DMG my son screamed and had tantrums frequently. He woke for an hour or two each night for a week. He is frequently frustrated, but his progress remains.

I know that it is up to me to weigh the risks/benefits of using DMG. I was hoping your institute could provide me with more information, as it has been very difficult to find anything written about DMG.

Many studies have shown that DMG enhances the effectiveness of the immune system, and it is therefore not surprising that DMG has anti-cancer activity.

Lisa Rider
Monmouth Junction, New Jersey

Editor's note: The above letter is similar to many we have received over the years from concerned parents who have read the section titled "Pangamic acid/DMG (vitamin B15)" in the *Doctors Vitamin and Mineral Encyclopedia* by Sheldon Hendler. DMG is NOT carcinogenic. Much to the contrary—DMG has been shown to *protect* against cancer.

The study that led to the false assertion that DMG might be carcinogenic was done by researchers who have made many false claims against vitamins before, including the nonsensical claim that vitamin C destroys vitamin B12. (It does not.) A study was published by A. J. W. Hoorn in *Mutation Research* (1989, pp. 343-350),

which was designed to investigate the idea that DMG was carcinogenic. Dr. Hoorn thoroughly refuted the earlier study, and pointed to errors in the way the study had been done. Sheldon Hendler, M.D., Ph.D., the author of the *Doctors Vitamin and Mineral Encyclopedia*, who has been a personal friend of mine for many years, now says, "The report which claimed to show carcinogenicity was false. There is no evidence whatsoever that DMG can cause harm."

Many studies have shown that DMG enhances the effectiveness of the immune system, and it is therefore not surprising that DMG has anti-cancer activity. For example, E. A. Reap and J. W. Lawson, of Clemson University, studied the effects of dimethylglycine on melanoma in mice. Their report showed that "DMG may play a role in inhibiting or slowing down the metastatic process [the spread of cancer]."

ARI is interested in hearing from parents who have tried these interventions which have been in the news lately. Write us with your observations—whether your trial helped the child or not:

—St. John's Wort (an antidepressant herb)

—Pycnogenol or grape seed extract (powerful antioxidants)

—Inositol (a B-vitamin being used as a treatment for obsessive-compulsive disorder)

—Fast ForWord (a computer program designed for dyslexic children, but also used with high-functioning autistic children).

Grapefruit juice warning

It's one of nature's healthiest foods, but it may be risky for individuals taking certain medications. Researchers report that grapefruit juice can dramatically increase concentrations of some drugs in the bloodstream, sometimes even leading to overdoses.

Kenneth Lown and colleagues discovered that grapefruit juice reduces amounts of an enzyme in the small intestine, CYP3A4, which breaks down medications. Moreover, the juice's effect on drug levels appears to increase over time.

Although the grapefruit juice/drug interaction has been reported primarily with blood pressure medications, antihistamines, hormone replacement drugs, and the sedative Halcion, Lown and colleagues say the enzyme

Risperidone update

(continued from page 2)

ARRI 10/3). Gleason and Conigliaro comment, "it appears that the protection from extrapyramidal side effects observed with risperidone does not ensure protection from neuroleptic malignant syndrome."

"Risperidone and explosive aggressive autism," Joseph P. Horrigan and L. Jarrett Barnhill; *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, Vol. 27, No. 3, June 1997, pp. 313-323. Address: Joseph P. Horrigan, Department of Psychiatry, CB# 7160, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC 27599-7160.

"An open clinical trial of risperidone monotherapy in young children with autistic disorder," R. L. Findling, K. Maxwell, and M. Wiznitzer; *Psychopharmacology Bulletin*, Vol. 33, No. 1, 1997, pp. 155-159. Address: R. L. Findling, Department of Psychiatry and Pediatrics, Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine, Cleveland, OH 44106.

"Brief report: risperidone for severely disturbed behavior and tardive dyskinesia in developmentally disabled adults," Barkat U. Khan; *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, Vol. 27, No. 4, 1997, pp. 479-489. Address: Barkat U. Khan, Gulf Coast Center, 5820 Buckingham Road, Ft. Myers, FL 33905.

"Extrapyramidal symptoms in patients treated with risperidone," G. M. Simpson and J. P. Lindenmayer; *Journal of Clinical Psychopharmacology*, Vol. 17, No. 3, June 1997, pp. 194-201. Address: G. M. Simpson, Dept. of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, USC School of Medicine, LAC/USC Medical Center, Los Angeles, CA 90033-1071.

"Fatal cardiac event following initiation of risperidone therapy," D. S. Ravin and J. W. Levenson; *Annals of Pharmacotherapy*, Vol. 31, No. 7-8, July 1997, pp. 867-870. Address: D. S. Ravin, Dept. of Pharmacy, Waterbury Hospital Health Ctr., Waterbury, CT 06721.

"Case study: risperidone-induced hepatotoxicity in pediatric patients," S. Kumra, D. Herion, L. K. Jacobsen, C. Briguglia, and D. Grothe; *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, Vol. 36, No. 5, May 1997, pp. 701-705. Address: S. Kumra, Department of Child Psychiatry, NIMH, Bethesda, MD 20892-1600.

"Neuroleptic malignant syndrome with risperidone," P. P. Gleason and R. L. Conigliaro; *Pharmacotherapy*, Vol. 17, No. 3, May 1997, pp. 617-621. Address: P. P. Gleason, Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences, School of Pharmacy, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA 15260.

the juice alters is involved in the metabolism of one out of every three drugs.

Pharmacologist Barbara Ameer says that "when the mechanism is better defined, it might be possible to predict what drugs are going to interact with grapefruit juice." In the meantime, researchers suggest that medications not be taken with grapefruit juice. Orange juice apparently has no effect on drug potency.

"Grapefruit juice increases felodipine oral availability in humans by decreasing intestinal CYP3A protein expression," K. S. Lown, D. G. Bailey, R. J. Fontana, S. K. Janardan, C. H. Adair, L. A. Fortlage, M. B. Brown, W. Guo, and P. B. Watkins; *Journal of Clinical Investigation*, Vol. 99, No. 10, May 15, 1997, pp. 2545-2553. Address: K. S. Lown, Dept. of Internal Medicine, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI 48109.