

## Sara's and Son Story

Our story started at a Suppers table when I had been attending the program for a couple of months. One of the themes that I heard over and over was "shared roots". Whether people came to meetings because they wanted to stay sober, manage diabetes, or be less dependent on antidepressants, we all shared roots in nutrient deficiencies from years of eating processed foods. The program calls us "health relatives" because even though the diagnoses are different, the basic solution is the same: eat whole foods. I had no idea how far reaching the consequences could be, but I watched people get better and that's pretty motivating.

My 13 year old son has exercise induced asthma, which means that when he exerts himself his breathing becomes labored. It was particularly bad during the past two winters, especially when wrestling and playing basketball. He also seemed to get every upper respiratory infection that was going around, and they always took awhile to heal. He used an inhaler for sports and a daily medication to help, but we had not seen good progress, if anything each winter his attacks were getting worse.

During the weeks at the Suppers sessions I began to be conscious about cooking with more vegetables and increasing the variety. At home our soups and salads were more packed with nutritious foods. I talked with my son about the need for more fruits and vegetables. Also, since he didn't eat much protein I especially emphasized adding protein to each meal, appealing to what motivated him: sports performance. He was already getting a basic supplement of fish oil each morning.

During one Suppers session the discussion was about essential fatty acids. Our Suppers group is really lucky to have a nutritionist who gives talks on things like normalizing blood sugar, eating to improve mood, and how to get off caffeine, etc. He said that the same fatty acids I needed to help with depression were likely to help my son's asthma. There it was again: shared roots. He recommended doubling our intake, saying most people who eat the standard American diet are deficient in essential fatty acids.

The next day I doubled my son's intake of EFAs. The wrestling season started the same week. I am happy to report my son wrestled many hard matches including 4 in a one day tournament. His season record was 12 and 4, with only one use of the inhaler for a very mild and brief episode of wheezing. He had one day of flu symptoms and one brief cold, way less than in previous winters. The whole family is now taking more EFAs. My husband was so excited, he told me to keep doing whatever I am doing because our son had such a healthy and successful wrestling season.

Everybody got what they wanted when our family started dealing with the issue of our shared roots. I got relief and satisfaction from setting my son on a path to better health that may also divert him from the depression that runs in the family. My son got to breathe better so he can wrestle. And my husband is the new health guru with the wrestling moms who want the same for their children.

One of the promises of the Suppers program is to not expose members to commercial messages or sales pitches. We do, however, frequently share our expertise. The Suppers forum gives me a warm and wonderful place to gather information I can put into our lives at a pace my family can stand.