

the masters he studies for inspiration.

"Photography brings you closer to nature because you're paying attention to every little thing that's in front of you," he says. "I want to have my own experiences, and I want to be able to share my ideas and my experiences with people."

—Chris Lazzarino

Eat right

Doctor prescribes healthy diet for kids' misdiagnosed maladies

For many children suffering with such ailments as allergies, coughs, acid reflux, infected sinuses and runny noses, the best medicine might be no medicine at all, but rather a change in what and when they eat. This is what physician and pediatric ear, nose and throat surgeon Julie Wei describes as her "career epiphany."

"We're talking about kids who are otherwise healthy, but they're not," says Wei, associate professor of otolaryngology. "The parents come to me as one more doctor, one more visit, hoping somebody can answer these questions about why their child is not getting better."

Wei, who started practicing at KU MedWest in Shawnee in 2003 after completing her residency at the Mayo Clinic, recalls that she began to wonder why she saw so many "sick" children whose medicines and inhalers were not effective. "Clearly when the medicine is not working," she says, "that tells me that whatever you've been diagnosed with, you must not have that."

About five years ago, Wei began asking parents about what their children ate, and the responses were alarmingly alike: Children consumed far too much dairy and sugar—which led Wei to describe her diagnosis as the "milk and cookie disease"—and ate too close to bedtime, which creates stomach acid that can lead to nighttime coughing and stuffed sinuses.

"I found families who are desperate, but skeptical," Wei says. "So I say to them, 'For the next four weeks you can try this, and if it doesn't work then we'll try the next stuff,' and one by one, so many times it worked. I was 'curing' symptoms without using any medicine or surgery. They became a believer and I became a believer."

Though she will soon leave to become chief of pediatric ENT at a new Florida



hospital, Wei's common-sense approach is still available thanks to her book, *A Healthier Wei: Reclaiming Health for Misdiagnosed & Overmedicated Children*, which can be ordered at her website, ahealthierwei.com. Also on

her website is a video, "The Kitchen is Closed," produced for Wei by Madison Davis Lacy, associate professor of film and media studies, and filmmaker Patrick Monroe, c'12.

Wei says that although her approach usually makes sense after it is explained to patients and their families, they first must get past psychological hurdles created by years of prescription medicines, expensive tests and emergency room visits.

"Had I not started asking them, 'What does your kid eat?' I would never have put this together. I'm a physician, a surgeon. I don't have training for that. But because I started asking, I noticed a pattern. Then it started to make sense to me."

—Chris Lazzarino

Whiz kids

Profiling identifies good students who might be overlooked

Creative geniuses aren't hard to identify in adulthood: They create the kinds of products, services and works of art and science that can help define a culture and make their originators famous.

But could schools do a better job nurturing these students—who often do



Physician Julie Wei says the "emotional complexity" of feeding too often leads parents to cave to their children's demands for unhealthy foods that contribute to chronic ailments impervious to medication. "This was not from textbooks or Mayo Clinic training," she says. "This was human beings working together and having a conversation. We were learning about this together."



A Healthier Wei: Reclaiming Health for Misdiagnosed & Overmedicated Children

by Dr. Julie Wei

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ahealthierwei.com