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ANAHEIM, Calif. -- Hands buried in the pockets of his khaki pants, 13-year-old Parker Jensen darts from a wheat-grass display to a machine that produces natural supplement pills. He pops a vitamin-enriched gummy snack as his parents trail behind him, taking in the hundreds of vendors pushing diet pills and herbal remedies inside the packed Anaheim Convention Center.

The Jensens, from Sandy, attended the nation's largest alternative medicine convention last weekend specifically for booth No. 1364, where Viennese physician George Birkmayer pitched his own supplement, ENADA, which he describes as "biological rocket fuel."

He also claims the supplement is the key to keeping Parker healthy.

Utahns first learned about Parker almost a year ago, when his parents defied a court order and the recommendations of several doctors as they searched for alternative treatments for his cancer. At the time, state officials were almost universally convinced Parker would succumb to the disease without chemotherapy, but Birkmayer has pronounced him 100 percent fit and said the fruity lozenges he has prescribed will ensure he stays that way.

Even though Parker has taken Birkmayer's trademark supplement for more than eight months, his first face-to-face meeting with his doctor took place over dinner at the Hilton in Anaheim on March 5. Before that, his parents, Daren and Barbara Jensen, had consulted with Birkmayer by phone on about 10 occasions.

Parker started taking ENADA on June 19, 2003, a little more than a month after a cancerous pea-sized tumor was removed from under his tongue, and just two days after a juvenile court judge in Utah began deliberating a medical neglect case filed against his parents.

At least four mainstream oncologists testified Parker had Ewing's sarcoma, a rare cancer that primarily strikes children, and that he would need chemotherapy to kill the remaining cancer cells. The Jensens steadfastly refused, saying they preferred alternative medicine to chemotherapy, which they consider too hazardous.

Birkmayer, who received his medical degree from the University of Munich, also has a strong aversion to chemotherapy and radiation. "All of my cancer patients, I treat with natural substances," he said.

Besides, chemotherapy for Parker would be ridiculous since he doesn't have cancer, Birkmayer insists.

He doubts the original diagnosis of Ewing's sarcoma, but does say Parker probably had some sort of cancer. Removal of the tumor was all that was needed.

"Parker is a healthy boy," Birkmayer said.



Physician George Birkmayer, left, talks about the medical treatment he is using on his patient, Parker Jensen of Sandy, who last year was diagnosed with Ewing's sarcoma, a rare form of cancer. Birkmayer, Parker and his parents were at a medical convention in Anaheim, Calif. Birkmayer disagrees with Parker's diagnosis, and has been treating him with an antioxidant cocktail made up, in part, with ENADAlert. (Suzanne Mapes)

Attempting to settle the court case last summer, Daren Jensen presented the judge with a letter from Birkmayer, saying he would manage Parker's health care with an antioxidant cocktail, anchored by ENADAlert, which should ward off any future tumors. Parker is also taking antioxidants Coenzyme Q10, vitamin C and selenium.

Together, these pills are supposed to boost Parker's immune system and increase his cellular energy.

State officials balked at Birkmayer's medical opinion, but ultimately dropped the high-profile case Oct. 24, saying it would be fruitless to force chemotherapy on Parker.

His parents researched other alternative options but decided to stick with ENADA, which Parker says is working.

"It gives me a lot of energy," he said at the conference. "I take it before snowboarding, because all that powder wears you out."

Daren Jensen found Birkmayer through an acquaintance. Bill Armstrong became chief executive officer of Prof. Birkmayer Health Products USA, based in Carlsbad, Calif., shortly after meeting Jensen in December 2002 and he called his friend once he heard about Parker's condition.

Barbara Jensen then contacted the physician and sounded "really depressed," Birkmayer said. He thought the case was "absurd" and decided to help.

He has provided ENADA to the Jensens for free ever since.

Off the shelf, a month's supply of ENADA costs \$39.25 in pill form and \$69.95 for the flavored lozenges. It is sold as a dietary supplement, and therefore is not regulated by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

All of the supplements Parker uses can be purchased at most health food stores, but the Jensens get everything but ENADA from Davis County physician Judith Moore, who practices alternative and mainstream medicine, and is Parker's treating physician. She shares all medical information with Birkmayer back in Austria. Daren Jensen said he takes Parker to see Moore about once a month.

In December, the Jensens sent a tissue sample from Parker's mouth to Stanford University. No cancerous cells were found, they say.

Studies show that while the Jensens' disdain for mainstream medicine might be out of the norm, their use of alternative treatments is not. A growing number of Americans turned to alternative medicine, from diet pills to spiritual healing, throughout the 1990s. Use of herbal remedies has increased greatly, according to a 1998 American Medical Association study, which found that more than 40 percent of respondents use some form of alternative medicine.

The Jensens are big proponents of ENADA. Other members of the family use the pills when they feel a cold coming on, Barbara Jensen said.

But mainstream doctors say they doubt the supplement will have much effect.

"It probably doesn't do any harm," said Kent DiFiori, an oncologist with Utah Cancer Specialists. "But who knows if it does any good or not?"

The main ingredient in ENADA is NADH, a coenzyme present in every living cell. NADH helps take nutrients in a cell and turns them into energy. Birkmayer says increased levels of cellular energy fortify the cell's defenses, repair DNA damage and lengthen the cell's life. He also claims his supplement releases

additional adrenaline and dopamine and is an antioxidant, which are substances that help protect cells from the effects of unstable molecules, called free radicals.

"As long as a person gets enough energy, he can cope with anything," Birkmayer said.

Physician Balz Frei, one of the nation's leading experts in antioxidants according to the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine, says NADH has only limited medical use because the natural substance, taken in pill form, never makes it past the cell wall.

Joy E. Swanson and Frei, from the Division of Nutritional Sciences at Cornell University, say they have never heard of NADH being used as an antioxidant.

"I would say in time this will be found to be false," Swanson said. NADH is "one of the most ubiquitous biochemicals in the body" and adding more will probably have little effect, she added.

Birkmayer says critics from his profession are following the standard "medical dogma," but insists he has personally conducted scientific medical trials showing ENADA's effectiveness.

Hugo Rodier, a Utah physician who focuses on nutrition and alternative medicine, supports Birkmayer's reasoning, saying cellular substances, such as NADH, are attracting attention from scientists throughout the world for their abilities to benefit nature's building blocks.

"What we are seeing in medicine is a better understanding that all diseases share the same common pathways," he said. "I agree with the doc."

But large medical studies have not yet been completed on most of Birkmayer's claims.

Still, Birkmayer touts its abilities.

"I have more than 30 documented cases -- terminal cases -- which we have cured," he said, including cases of lung, colon and prostate cancer.

He says NADH can slow the division of cancer cells and decrease the size of tumors, but he is hesitant to call ENADA a "magic bullet for cancer treatment" until a trial is completed. One thing certain about ENADA is its profitability. Birkmayer is now using the proceeds of sales to revamp Wolfsberg Castle in Vienna into a preventative care hospital.

Birkmayer told the Jensens about Vienna and his castle during their first dinner together last week. But the main topic of conversation was Parker's ongoing treatment. Despite the Jensens' outward show of strength, Birkmayer said Parker fears he will find another tumor.

"Parker is a very cordial boy with some psychological problems," he said. "His concern is that it may come back. I told Daren this is the only problem he needs to solve. He should do some positive thinking. He is now a year without cancer.

Parker's worries may come from the comments of his past doctors who told him he has a slow-growing form of Ewing's sarcoma that they expect will metastasize sometime in the next five years.

As long as Parker continues to take his lozenges twice a day, Birkmayer says that won't happen. "I am convinced Parker is in good health and will stay in good health."

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