

Positive Parenting

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Your Best Bet in Bringing Up Your Child

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Volume 1 • 2015
Family Wellness

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the way we teach, we
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child can learn.”



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resilience starts with
the family.”



Malaysian Association of Kindergartens

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children for formal
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learning.”

There's More To Life Than Academic Excellence

As parents, you would not be wrong to want to ensure that your child excels academically. However, many parents make the mistake of over-emphasising this one aspect of their child's education. Of equal importance is the social and emotional development of your child. Let's not forget that we humans are first and foremost a gregarious lot and our emotions are an integral part of our psyche. Thus, if a child's social and emotional development is not attended to, he may fare poorly in his adult life as he will most likely be lacking in social graces and emotional stability.

It is with this in mind that we have included an article on your best bet in bringing up your child to be a well-rounded individual. We hope that the tips and ideas contained within this article will be of help to you in your quest to ensure that your child has the best possible chance to succeed in life. Success is not always measured by academic excellence alone, as people like Nick Vujicic (an extraordinary young man born without arms or legs who is now a world-renowned motivational speaker) prove that strong social and emotional skills are equally as important.

We have also included some words of wisdom from trusted professionals that highlight some of the common problems faced by parents such as how postpartum depression is not the sole bailiwick of women (as it also effects men), a closer look at gestational diabetes, how to deal with constipation, the ever-present dangers of meningococcal meningitis, a 'Breastfeeding 101', and also an in-depth look at tonsillitis and why tonsillectomies are discouraged.

Lastly, we hope that you will continue to ensure that your child will grow and prosper in a safe and healthy environment. It is our deepest hope that this issue will continue to help empower you in your efforts to raise a healthy, happy, and well-rounded child. We hope you will enjoy reading this issue. All our previous articles and issues can be accessed from our website www.mypositiveparenting.org.



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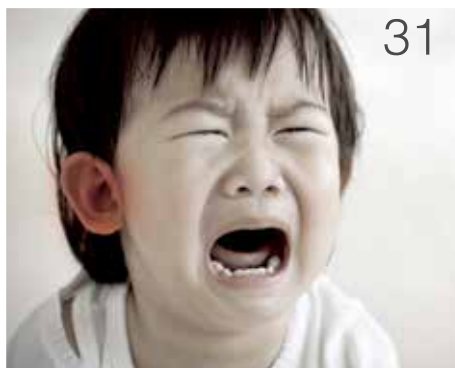
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For enquiries, please contact:

Positive Parenting Secretariat

VERSAE COMM (03) 773-91

12-A Jalan PJS 8/4, Mentari Plaza,
Bandar Sunway, 46150 Petaling Jaya,
Selangor, Malaysia

Tel: (03) 5632 3301 • Fax: (03) 5638 9909

Email: parentcare@mypositiveparenting.org



Datuk Dr Zulkifli Ismail
Chairman, Positive Parenting Management Committee
President, Asia Pacific Paediatric Association (APPA)

Your Best Bet in Bringing Up Your Child

As parents, providing your child with proper nutrition and an excellent education is a good start. However, our modern lifestyle has too much emphasis on bringing up the next child prodigy who will excel in either sports, studies, or even better, both! This situation often leads to a sad lack of concern on two other aspects that are very important but also frequently overlooked – namely his **social skills** and **emotional well-being**. Both of these aspects are equally important as they will serve him well once he is an adult.

Parenthood is no easy task, and new information often surfaces that may make you doubt your approach to parenting. However, all is not lost – just bear in mind that the core of parenting is love and affection, which is what your child mainly needs from you.

Read on to learn more about how you can raise a socially and emotionally balanced child.





Dr. Rajini Sarvananthan
Developmental Paediatrician

In the Beginning...

Starting right from your child's birth, the most important relationships that he will form will start with you and any others (family members and/or caregivers) that he is in close contact with. It is these relationships that will shape his social and emotional development as he grows.

The basis of any relationship is interaction, and you will need to find ways to communicate and spend quality time with him. This facilitates and strengthens your relationship, allowing for a deeper bond between you.

Bear in mind that babies are social creatures who want and need to spend a lot of time interacting with you. It's perfectly natural for him to try 'talking' with you by babbling or with facial expressions and gestures. You can show him that you love and care for him by responding in kind as this will allow him to learn about communication, behaviour and emotions. At the same time, you will also provide him with feelings of safety and security while strengthening your relationship with him.

Learning by watching

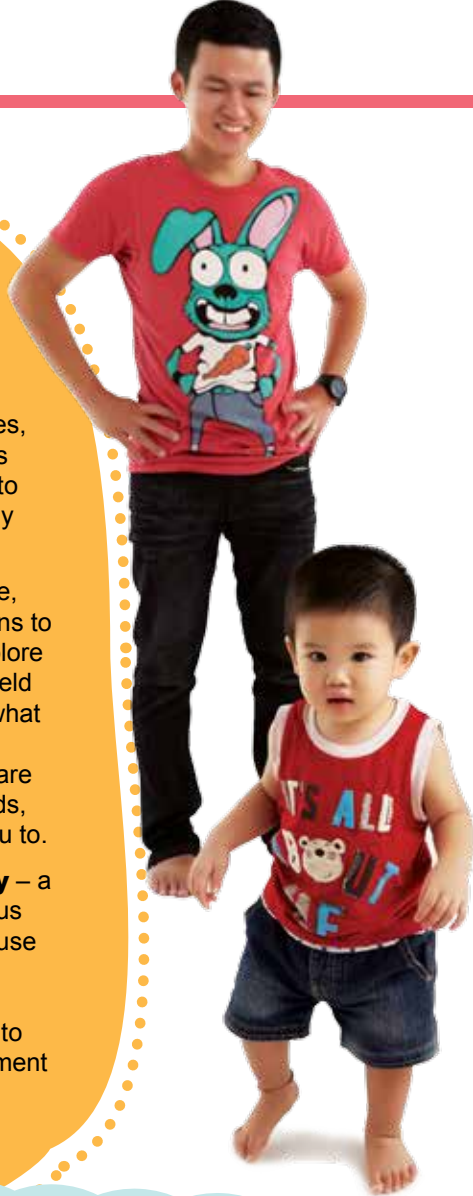
Your relationships with other people will also influence your child's development. He is constantly observing what you are doing, and he will try to emulate the way that you act with other people (e.g. your spouse, family members, friends and caregivers). He will essentially copy how you act and react with others, so it is important to provide him with a positive environment in order to set the right tone for his development.



Into toddlerhood

To begin building on your relationship with him, you must ensure that you are always there to support and encourage him. Being there is essential as it will give him the confidence to explore his world. As he grows and develops you will want to keep these five key points in mind (the first four will still be valid even once he is an adult), namely:

- 1. Love him unconditionally** – shower him with your love and affection. Don't forget to support and accept him as he is. Don't be shy to show him physical affection and spend quality one-on-one time together. This will go a long way toward boosting his self-confidence and emotional stability.
- 2. Allow him to make his own decision** – start by treating him with respect and encourage him to be independent. Let him make his own choices whenever possible that is within reason (e.g. "Do you want to play ball or bubbles?") – this will help him to grow into a self-sufficient and self-reliant adult.
- 3. Health is wealth** – as much as possible, be a role model for a healthy lifestyle (e.g. proper nutrition, regular exercise, limit the use of electronics and gadgets etc.) so that he will emulate you. With rising statistics for non-communicable diseases (e.g. diabetes, heart disease, hypertension, etc.) it is becoming more and more important to get children started on living a healthy lifestyle from young.
- 4. Safety** – when he is under your care, always take the necessary precautions to protect him while allowing him to explore the world. As he grows, don't just shield him from dangers; teach him about what he needs to know in order to protect himself. As much as possible, be aware of his activities and his circle of friends, but don't intrude unless he invites you to.
- 5. Managing behaviour positively** – a carrot works better than a stick – focus on using positive reinforcement and use punishments only when all else fails. You should also direct your attention on the behaviour. An important point to remember is that any type of punishment should NEVER be physical.



Grow with your child

As he grows into toddlerhood and beyond, you will need to expand your repertoire of social/emotional skills as well. Here are some tips to help you mould a well-rounded child:

- 1. Focus on strengths.** Avoid the temptation to criticise! Find something praise-worthy to talk about and from there, talk about what can be improved without being patronising.
- 2. Fair consequences for misbehaving.** Be careful not to set punishments when you are angry, it will only undermine your position if it is not enforced, or if you relent and stop it later. For instance, if he draws on the walls, get him to do the clean-up himself (you may need to supervise); but be warned, if he finds the clean-up to be fun, he might do it again! Repeat offenders may need additional consequences such as loss of some TV time for the day.
- 3. Don't humiliate or mock him.** Using labels (e.g. "Are you stupid?!") and making unfair criticisms or sarcasm can make him feel bad, and if done often enough, it will cause him to lose his self-confidence. Over time, it may also cause a rift in your relationship.
- 4. Let him solve problems on his own.** As long as it does not impact his safety, resist the urge to take over. Let him work things out. You can encourage him along by asking him questions or giving him hints. Remember, kids learn by doing and making mistakes, so if you take over every time he hits a wall, it will not help him in the long run.
- 5. Be willing to apologise.** If the error was on your part, apologise and calmly tell him what you meant. This shows him that there is nothing wrong with admitting you were at fault, and also what to do if he is ever in that position himself.

Your child's sense of self is important

In order to raise a well-rounded child, you will also need to help him build his self-esteem. This will become important once your child starts school, as he will be more engaged in learning if he feels valued and respected. This is the basis for social and emotional learning, which in a nutshell means that he will acquire the skills to recognise and manage his emotions, show care and concern for others. He will also grow into a responsible adult who will have positive relationships and handle challenging situations effectively.

There are basically five core areas that need to be addressed, namely:

Self-Awareness:

Work with your child to help him identify and recognise emotions. Don't be afraid to have intimate talks with him to explore his thoughts and/or feelings and above all, don't be judgemental! You will also need to work closely with him to recognise his strengths and to find out what his needs and values are. Encourage him to keep a journal as a means for him to increase his self-awareness and self-reflection.

Self-Management:

This involves impulse control, stress management, and self-motivation and discipline. Other soft skills he will need include goal setting and organisational skills. Prior to this however, you will need to teach him how to handle his emotions so that they help rather than hinder whatever he is working on. One method is to use "self-talk" to encourage himself – he should be his own best friend and NOT his worst critic. He should also learn what makes him angry and upset, and learn how to deal with them.

Social Awareness:

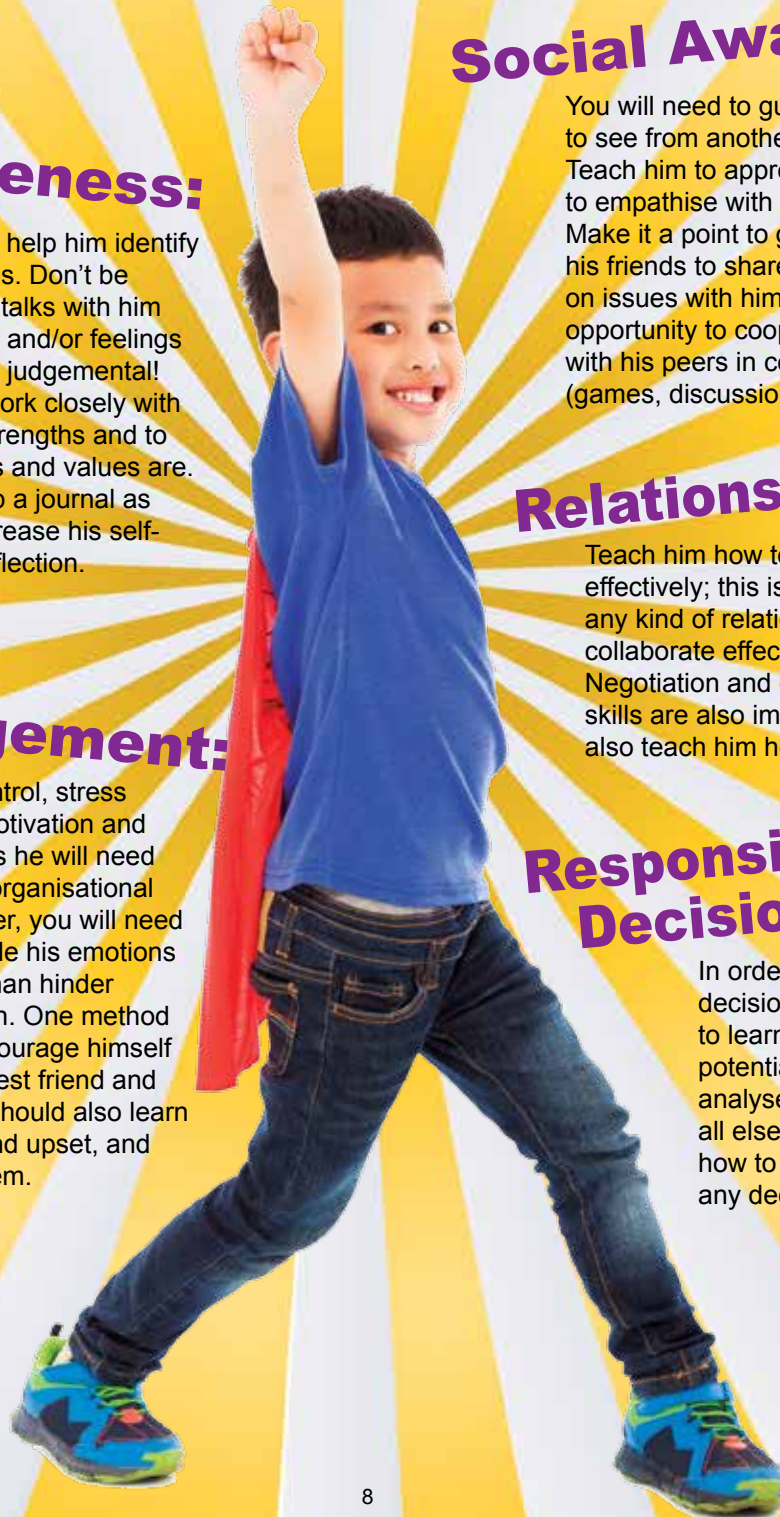
You will need to guide him to learn how to see from another person's perspective. Teach him to appreciate diversity, and to empathise with and respect others. Make it a point to get him to encourage his friends to share their points of view on issues with him. He should find every opportunity to cooperate and engage with his peers in collaborative activities (games, discussions, etc.)

Relationship Skills:

Teach him how to communicate effectively; this is the basis for building any kind of relationship, and to work/ collaborate effectively with others. Negotiation and conflict management skills are also important and you should also teach him how to say no.

Responsible Decision Making:

In order to make a 'good' decision, he will need to learn how to identify potential problems and analyse a situation. Above all else, he must also learn how to be responsible for any decisions he has made.



Your Response is What Moulds Him

As parents, how you respond to your child's needs or demands will shape how he perceives and reacts to the world. Children have five basic emotional needs in life, namely the need to be respected, to feel important, to be accepted, to be included and to feel secure. When these needs are met, it provides him with a stable platform for success in life, such as academic, work, and marriage/relationships. On the other hand, failing to recognise and satisfy his needs will have a detrimental effect on him and his future.

Need to Feel Respected

All children need to feel respected, and your child is no exception. For this to happen, you should treat him in a courteous manner. Be thoughtful, attentive and civil mannered when you deal with him, just like how you would treat any other person. How better to teach your child about respect than to accord him the same?

In order for this to happen, you will need to be cautious of your own behaviour toward him and others in general. This includes avoiding sarcastic comments that belittle, cutting down on yelling, learning to control your anger and impatience, never stooping to lies, listening more and talking less, giving fewer orders (instead, use more suggestions/requests), and never forgetting your 'magic words' (please, thank you, excuse me, I'm sorry).

Need to Feel Important

To feel important helps your child to validate his sense of worth. He needs to be reassured that you value him, to feel useful, in essence, to be somebody. As parents, you need to know when to let them do things on their own. You don't have to be super dad/mom and solve every problem, make every decision, do all the work, or control everything that happens with regard to your child.

Let him be involved! Ask him for his opinions, give him things to do, and allow him to share in decision makings (e.g. where the next family vacation will be). The final say will still be yours to make, but including him gives him status and recognition. This allows him to develop a sense of value in a constructive manner.

Need to Feel Accepted

Your child needs to feel accepted as his own person – he is unique and should be treated as such. He has a right to his own feelings and opinions. Never fall into the trap of trivializing, ignoring, or ridiculing his feelings

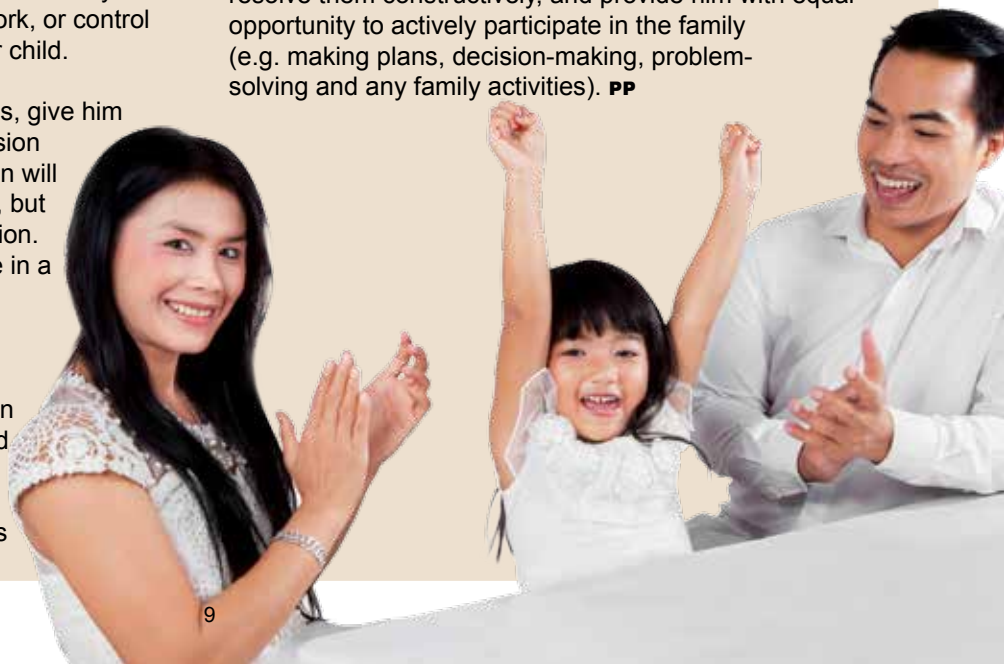
or opinions as this is a form of rejection that will damage your relationship with him. You don't have to agree with everything he has to say, but pay attention to him when he airs his views. You can always discuss them together and this will bring a sense of camaraderie into your relationship, thus strengthening it.

Need to Feel Included

As a part of the family, your child needs to feel included. He needs to feel like part of what goes on in daily life and be connected. Make it a point to experience things together as a family in a meaningful way by creating these opportunities for him. You will find that at the end of the day, your family ties will become stronger. It can be something as simple as washing a car together, a picnic or a family outing where everyone has fun together.

Need to Feel Secure

Lastly, your child needs to feel a sense of security. Create a positive environment where you show him that you care for each other, allow him to express himself and be heard, accept any differences/disagreements he may have and resolve them constructively, and provide him with equal opportunity to actively participate in the family (e.g. making plans, decision-making, problem-solving and any family activities). **PP**



Family Wellness

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- Maternal Care
- Parenting Skills
- You & Your Spouse
- Safety and Injury Prevention

What About Gestational Diabetes?

By **Dr Krishna H Kumar**, Consultant Obstetrician & Gynaecologist, and President of Malaysia Medical Association (MMA)

Gestational diabetes mellitus (GDM) develops during pregnancy (gestation). However, in Malaysia, most women neglect to have a medical examination before embarking in their pregnancy. Therefore, overt diabetes mellitus is usually only picked up when pregnant women go for their routine checkups.

It is the national policy to screen women based on risk factors but more and more evidence is suggesting that all pregnancies should be screened for diabetes. The earlier the disease is identified and managed, the better the chance of reducing the complications.

Like all other types of diabetes, it causes high blood sugar (blood sugar level ≥ 7.8 mmol/L). This can affect your pregnancy and your baby's health.

GDM complications:

- over-nutrition and excess growth of the baby. Weighing more than 4kg or termed macrosomia
- unusually large size of the baby increases the need for induced labour or a caesarean birth, and may lead to birth problems or injuries to both mother and baby
- birth defects (affect major organs such as the brain and heart)
- increased rate of miscarriage
- increased risk of stillbirth
- premature birth – birth before 37th week of pregnancy
- increased risk of having gestational diabetes in future pregnancies
- baby may be at greater risk of developing diabetes, heart disease or obesity later in life

Almost all women have some degree of impaired glucose intolerance as a result of hormonal changes that occur during pregnancy. However, blood sugar usually returns to normal soon after delivery.



Are you at Risk?

Any woman can develop gestational diabetes, and the risk factors are quite similar to any form of type 2 diabetes. These include:

- Women older than age 25
- Family or personal history of diabetes mellitus
- Excessive weight or obese (BMI score of ≥ 30)
- Previously gave birth to a baby over 4kg or gave birth to a stillborn baby.

Still, many women who develop gestational diabetes have no known risk factor – which is why you should go for your scheduled health screening. You'll likely have a **screening test** during your second trimester — **between 24 and 28 weeks of pregnancy**. If your doctor suspects you're at **high risk of GDM**, the test may be performed before the **13th week of pregnancy**.

Glucose Tolerance Test

The test measures your body's response to sugar (glucose). You'll fast overnight, then have your blood sugar level measured. Then you'll be given a sweet beverage – containing a high concentration of glucose – and your blood sugar level will be checked before and 2 hours after your drink. If any of the blood sugar readings are higher than normal, you'll be diagnosed with gestational diabetes.

Prevention of GDM involves:

Consuming foods high in fibre and low in fat and calories. Focus on fruits, vegetables and whole grains. Strive for variety to help you achieve your diet goals without compromising taste or nutrition. For portion sizes, you can refer to the Malaysian Healthy Food Pyramid.

Type of food	Benefits for pregnant women
<u>Whole grains</u> Oatmeal, whole-grain bread, whole-wheat pasta or brown rice	Fortified with folic acid, iron and fibre
<u>Beans</u> Black beans, white beans, pinto beans, lentils, black-eyed peas, and kidney, or soy beans.	Protein, fibre, good sources of key nutrients, such as iron, folate, calcium, and zinc.
<u>Fish</u> Salmon, tilapia, sardine and mackerel	Omega-3 fatty acids, protein, B vitamins and low in mercury.
<u>Berries</u> Blueberries, raspberries, and blackberries	Packed with vitamin C, potassium, folate, and fibre.
<u>Low-fat yoghurt</u>	More calcium than milk, is high in protein, and no added sugar.

Exercising before and during pregnancy. Aim for 30 minutes of moderate activity on most days of the week. Take a brisk daily walk, do some gardening, or have a swim.

If you've already been positively diagnosed with GDM, the same measures apply to help you manage your condition. However, doctors don't advise losing weight or recommend vigorous exercises during pregnancy. Your doctor or dietician can help create a nutrition plan to help you manage your GDM. A customised diet plan works best because it considers your specific weight, height, activity level, stage of pregnancy and your glucose levels.

Your doctor will also decide whether you should be taking insulin shots or not. This is essentially based on your blood sugar levels monitored from time to time. Delivery of your baby may be earlier based on your blood sugar control as well as the dose of insulin required to manage your diabetes. You need to discuss with your doctor on the options available. **PP**

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Avoiding The “F” Word: Favouritism

Favouring one child over another could result in life-long damage to your child.

By **Dr Rajini Sarvananthan**, Developmental Paediatrician

Parental favouritism is defined as the perceived or actual practice of giving unfair preferential treatment to one child at the expense of another. In many instances, even when parents are determined to treat their children equally, they soon find that this is easier said than done. There are many different kinds of favouritism and various reasons for playing favourites, some of which are:

- One child has more in common with one or both parent(s) than the other either in terms of gender, character or behaviour.
- Spending more time with one particular child and not enough with the others.
- Birth order: parents favour first- and last-born children over middle children.
- Parents are more responsive toward children who are pleasant and more affectionate.
- Favouring a high-achieving child rather than the average or underachieving one.

Favouritism is practiced (either consciously or subconsciously) by many parents. However, it starts becoming problematic when there are consistent, evident and arbitrary differences in treatment between siblings.



It Affects All

Favourite children grow up with a high level of self-esteem (albeit sometimes distorted or misguided). However, they are also often under the impression that rules don't apply to them. Furthermore, they are likely to struggle with intimate relationships and are most likely to be alienated and disliked by other siblings.

Unfavoured children grow up vulnerable to feelings of defeat, believing that hard work and determination will not reap the rewards they desire. They also increase risk of mental health problems such as aggression, attention, and emotional problems (i.e. depression and/or anxiety).

Parents observing their spouses inappropriate attachment to one child are likely to be uneasy. The mental health of these parents as well as their parenting skills are at risk. There's also a good chance that this destructive behaviour will be emulated and "passed on" onto the next generation.

Fair Is Not Equal

- Adjust your expectations to be more appropriate to your children's ages, learning curves, personality, etc.
- Any chores or responsibilities around the house (i.e. take out garbage, mop the floor, and clean table) should be delegated fairly between siblings even the youngest of them – once they are able to of course. Everyone should contribute, but remember to keep tasks age appropriate.
- Spend some quality one-on-one time at least once a week with all your children. Just a few minutes of attention, reassurance and a show of affection can mean a whole lot.
- Provide each of your children the same opportunities to succeed. Managing your parental resources (e.g. love, attention, money, etc.) to suit the needs of each of your children can be difficult. So, plan ahead and don't be ashamed to seek advice or ideas from more experienced parents (i.e. your own parents or friends) or even professional family counsellors.
- Make sure any rewards, gifts or punishments received are proportional to a child's age. You shouldn't react to a 3-year-old's tantrums in the same way as you would to a 13-year-old's or buy the same gift for your 17-year-old who does well in her SPM as your 12-year-old who scored in UPSR.
- Discuss and always seek advice and support from your spouse. Sometimes some of our mistakes are only obvious when our actions are viewed from a different perspective.

Every child is different and parents must respond to their unique characteristics and needs appropriately – one size **DOESN'T** fit all. Ultimately, all your children, no matter how many you have, are different and beautifully unique in their own way - appreciate and celebrate that fact. Try your best to stay aware of any differential treatment you might give and try to be as fair as possible. **PP**

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Postpartum Depression in Men

By **Dr Yen Teck Hoe**, Consultant Psychiatrist

Seeing baby for the first time is often a joyous occasion that will fill you with pride and excitement. However, the reality of the situation can be mentally and emotionally wearing – this may include sleepless nights, and baby crying and screaming for care and attention.

Things may begin to slide from there and you may begin to feel more and more miserable. You may become more easily irritated and stress at work may cause you to constantly lose your temper with your wife. Or it's possible that you may drink more or withdraw from people.

An emerging phenomenon

These are all signs of Paternal Post-Partum Depression (PPPD) which occur in men, and it is now becoming recognised that postpartum depression is not the sole bailiwick of women. It was reported in the Journal of the American Medical Association that prenatal and postpartum depression happens in roughly 1 out of 10 men and this figure was relatively higher three to six months after baby is born.

However, little is known at present about the prevalence, risk factors, and effects of depression among new fathers. The prevailing thought is that fathers face an increased risk of depression both postpartum and during his spouse's pregnancy.

How to spot it

Generally, most men are far more likely to be in denial about their depression which often times worsens the symptoms. The best person to spot any behavioural changes is one's spouse, and the main things to watch out for include:

Classic Symptoms of Depression

- **Depressed, sad mood**
- **Loss of interest or pleasure**
 - **Significant weight loss or gain**
- **Trouble sleeping or over-sleeping**
- **Restlessness (unable to stay still or slow down)**
 - **Fatigue, loss of energy, or tired all the time**
- **Worthless or guilty feelings**
 - **Poor concentration, difficulty making decisions**
- **Constantly thinking of death or suicide**

Remember that you do not need to experience all these symptoms to be depressed. Equally important is the intensity of the symptoms, not just the number of symptoms that manifest. Always keep in mind the fact that this is a highly treatable condition. There is absolutely no reason for you to continue suffering from them. While postpartum depression in men is a serious (and in extreme cases even life-threatening) condition, you can recover from it.

How you can cope

There are a few things you can do to manage this problem:

1. One of the most important is to **ensure that you do not neglect yourself**. While it is important to take care of your baby, it is equally important to take care of your own needs. Make sure you get enough rest, eat healthily, and believe in yourself as a father.
2. **Always remember that your spouse is your partner**. Instead of keeping all your feelings bottled up, share them with her. Regardless of whether or not she can do anything about them, sharing your feelings allows you to talk through your emotional states and thoughts. Sometimes, that's all it takes for you to feel less burdened!



You are not alone!

Postpartum depression is a medical issue that should be addressed, not shunted aside or ignored. Make it a point to seek help – you can consult a doctor or psychologist who can guide you on how you can handle it. In addition to medical/professional help, you can also talk to your family and friends. Remember, the first step is to acknowledge that you have PPPD and to know that you are not alone.

It will take courage, determination, and a desire to overcome PPPD – the best way to accomplish this is by taking positive action such as seeking medical/professional advice and otherwise confronting it head-on. Don't wait if you think that you may have any kind of negative feelings toward yourself or your baby. Don't suffer any longer than necessary, get help now. **PP**

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Nutrition & Healthy Living

- Nutri Tips and Insights
- Breastfeeding
- Complementary Feeding
- Healthy Recipes

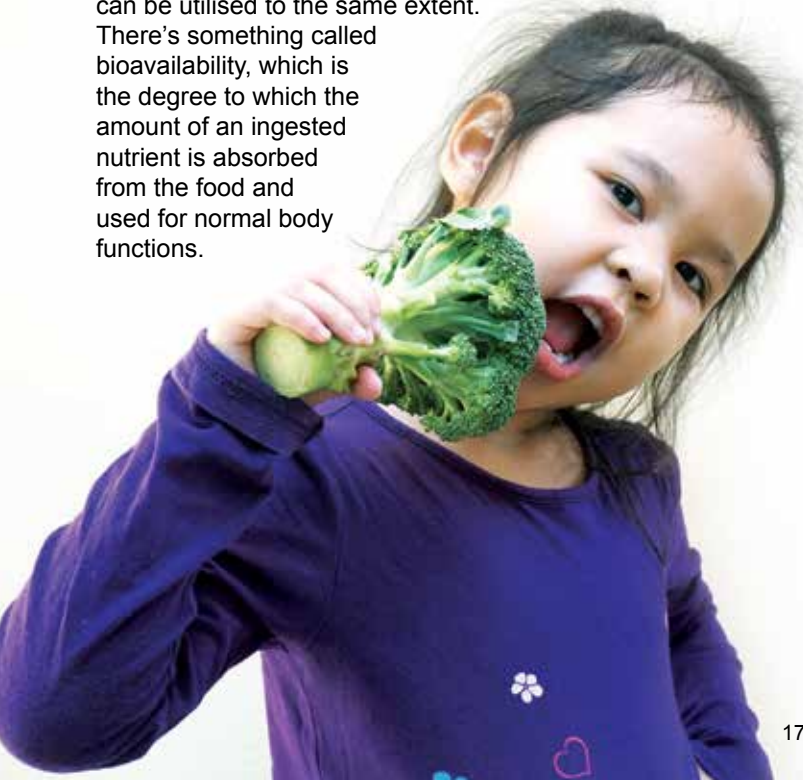
Balanced Diet Needed for Better Nutrient Absorption

By **Prof Norimah A Karim**, Nutritionist & Honorary Secretary of Nutrition Society of Malaysia

It is always a good idea to eat a well-balanced diet as this will meet your nutrient requirements while avoiding deficiencies and chemical excesses or imbalances. Try asking any nutritionist or dietitian and you will get the same answer.

What happens when you eat your food? Your body's digestive system goes to work to release the nutrients contained within it, and absorb them into your bloodstream which then transports them to their respective target tissues. However, not all nutrients can be utilised to the same extent.

There's something called bioavailability, which is the degree to which the amount of an ingested nutrient is absorbed from the food and used for normal body functions.



Are you aware?
Higher absorption of minerals occurs among individuals who are deficient in a mineral, while certain elements in your diet (e.g. oxalic acid or oxalate in spinach) can decrease mineral availability by chemically binding to the mineral.

There are several factors that influence how much of a nutrient is used, stored, or excreted, namely:

- **Nutrient components of food**, chemical form of the nutrient
- **Gender, age, nutrient status and life stage** (e.g. pregnancy)
- **Macronutrients** – carbohydrates, proteins, fats (high ingestion rate of > 90%)
- **Micronutrients** – vitamins and minerals (varies widely in how much is absorbed and utilised).
- **Excess intake of one mineral** can influence the absorption and metabolism of other minerals.



Did you know?

- Meat, fish and poultry contains highly bio-available iron that is known to enhance the absorption of iron from all foods.
- Vitamin D aids in the absorption of calcium, phosphorous, and magnesium.
- Fat-soluble vitamins A, D, E and K all require fats in order for them to be absorbed.

How nutrients can complement one another

Nutrients can interact with each other in different ways, such as keeping another nutrient soluble or protecting it from interaction with nutrient inhibitors. For instance, when foods that are rich in Vitamin C are consumed together with iron rich foods, the iron absorption is increased by two or three times – have a glass of freshly squeezed orange juice together with a bowl of breakfast cereal and it will help your body absorb more of the iron in the cereal.

Inhibitors of nutrient absorption

Just as nutrients can help with other nutrient absorption, they can also interact with one another in the opposite manner by cancelling each other out. For instance, phytic acid (which is abundant in certain plant foods such as pulses, whole-grain cereals, seeds, or nuts) will interfere with the absorption of calcium, iron, and zinc. This is especially critical to know if you take calcium and/or iron supplements so that you can plan your intake accordingly at a different time of day so as to avoid interference.

Balanced diet is important

Living in this modern world now, you will find that a lot of times, vitamins and minerals are added to foods to increase their nutritional value. For instance, B vitamins (folic acid) are often added to breakfast cereals, flour and certain spreads, and are more bio-available than what is naturally present in our food (dietary folate, such as those found in fruits, vegetables).

However, this does not mean that you should only consume foods fortified with folic acid. Natural dietary sources such as green leafy vegetables can be complemented with these foods, and not the other way around. After all, these natural dietary sources will contain lots of other beneficial nutrients such as unique vitamins/minerals, phytochemicals and fibre.

You won't go wrong if you maintain a balanced, moderate and varied diet as it promotes maximal nutrient absorption. This is the key to getting the most out of food. **PP**

Interesting facts

There are two main sources of iron in food, namely haem iron and non-haem iron. Haem iron is derived mainly from haemoglobin/myoglobin in animal protein sources and is readily bio-available.

On the other hand, non-haem iron is derived from plant sources such as enriched cereals and pasta, beans, and dark green leafy vegetables.

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1 in 2 children are described by their parents as 'picky eater', is your kid a **PICKY EATER?**

Your child may be a picky eater if he exhibits any of the following behaviours:



Picky eaters may miss out **7 Key Nutrients** from **7 Food categories** that are vital for healthy growth and development.

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7+7

Key
Nutrients

Food
Categories

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IMPORTANT NOTICE: The World Health Organization recommends exclusive breastfeeding during the first 6 months of life and continued breastfeeding for as long as possible. S-26[®] PE Gold[®] is not a breast milk substitute but a growing-up milk specially suited to healthy young children aged 1 year and above.

Fats, Salt & Sugar:

Not So Much, Please!

By **Dr Tee E Siong**, Nutritionist & President of the Nutrition Society of Malaysia

Fats, salt and sugar are integral dietary components for the growth and development of your child. However, they are only needed in small amounts; this is why it occupies the top portion of the Malaysian Food Pyramid. It implies that all three components should be consumed the least compared to other food groups at the lower levels of the food pyramid. That's because in excess;

- **Fats** have been linked to increased risk of obesity, coronary heart disease and certain types of cancer.
- **Salt** may lead to high blood pressure and diseases such as stomach cancer.
- **Sugar** provides unneeded empty calories that cause weight gain thus leading to overweight and obesity as well as increases risk of diabetes and possibly other non-communicable diseases.

The Facts About Fats, Salt And Sugar

Understand the following simple information about fats, salt and sugar. They will guide you in appropriate consumption of foods containing these nutrients.

FAT		
Function	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Important source of energy and essential fatty acids. ■ Absorption of fat-soluble vitamins such as A, D, E, and K. ■ Insulating the body temperature. ■ For brain and cell development. ■ As building blocks for hormones. 	
High-content sources	Trans fat	Commercially baked and fried foods made with partially hydrogenated oils and fats.
	Unsaturated fat	Nuts/seeds/vegetable oils, avocado and various fishes (i.e. tuna, mackerel).
	Saturated fat	Full fat dairy, red meat, processed meat, and eggs.
When to introduce?	During infancy, babies obtain fat from breast milk which is essential for their development. Almost 50% of the energy supplied by breast milk is in the form of fat. Solids that are cooked using oil can be introduced occasionally after a year in very limited amounts.	
	Recommendation	Reduce intake of fried foods, fatty meat and foods with <i>santan</i> . Limit intake of foods that may contain trans fat.



SALT aka Sodium

Function	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Important for controlling blood pressure and blood volume. ■ Needed for muscles and nerves to work properly.
High-content sources	Around 75% of the sodium we eat everyday comes from sodium added to processed foods, at restaurants, hawkers stalls, canteens and fast food outlets, including salts added during cooking.
When to introduce?	Preference for sodium is shaped by dietary exposure since young, so the less sodium children consume, the less they want as they grow older. You can withhold using table salt when cooking solid food for your child until he/she is old enough (>1 year old). Even then, only use a limited amount or none at all since most processed food products in the market already contain sodium.
Recommendation	Substitute use of salt and sauces in cooking with herbs and spices such as pepper, garlic, ginger, basil, cinnamon, onion, or even fruits such as orange or lemon juice. Reduce consumption of high salt foods (i.e. salted eggs, vegetables or snacks).

SUGAR

Function	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Provides energy for your child's body in the form of simple carbohydrates.
High-content sources	<p><u>Natural</u>: in milk (lactose) and in fruit (fructose). They are purely carbohydrates but the food sources in which they are found have a lot more nutrients to offer.</p> <p><u>Added sugars</u>: in processed foods, such as breads, cakes, soft drinks, jams, ice cream, and sugar eaten separately or added to foods at the table.</p>
When to introduce?	Once an infant moves on to solids (>6 months), most of the foods introduced (e.g. raw fruits and vegetables) should contain one or more naturally-available sugar derivatives. Table sugar on the other hand, can be introduced much later in cooked foods in limited amounts. Like salt, preference towards sugar is habitual.
Recommendation	Reduce intake of high sugar foods and beverages including processed foods, local kuih and soft drinks.

Practical Tips You Can Follow

You should seek to limit your child's intake of foods that are high in fats, salt and sugar. However, this does not mean subjecting them to a stringent "low-" or "none-at-all" diet. Here are some smarter, healthier solutions:

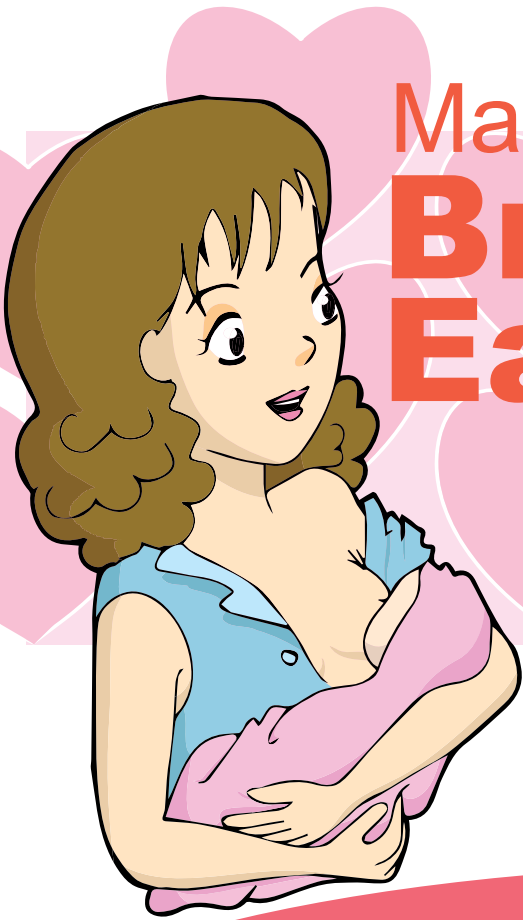
- Be a role model and practice what you preach.
- Trim away fat in meat and discard poultry skin.
- Practice healthy cooking methods: Stir-fry, steam, stew, grill, roast, or sear your dishes with as little oil as possible or none at all.
- Use kitchen towels/ tissue to blot out excess oil after deep-frying your dishes.
- Use plant-based oils (i.e. palm oil) if you decide to fry a dish and if you're baking, reduce use of sugar by one third from the amount you normally use.
- Sauces, seasoning and table salt contain a lot of sodium. Try adding flavour by using natural herbs and spices as a substitute.
- Limit fast foods and do not associate it as a reward.
- Pack healthy snacks for school (fruits, cereal bars, *tau fufah*, etc.), do not skip main meals (breakfast, lunch and dinner) and prepare moderate portion of a variety of foods at home.

A balanced diet which consists of a variety of food items ensures your child obtains different nutrients he/she needs for optimum growth and overall health. Similarly important is to encourage your child to do regular physical activity for at least 30 minutes of moderate intensity exercise each day.

Use the Malaysian Food Pyramid as your guide or head on to the Nutrition Society of Malaysia's website for even more educational materials on healthy eating (www.nutriweb.org.my). Remember, a child who eats well, grows well. **PP**

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Making Breastfeeding Easy

Breast milk is the most natural and nutrient dense milk source and it is the best way to nourish your baby in the early years of his life! It is recommended that mothers exclusively breastfeed their babies for the first six months of life where your baby only receives breast milk without any additional food or drinks, including water. Thereafter, your baby should receive complementary foods and to continue breastfeeding up to 2 years of age or beyond.

By **Dato' Dr Musa Mohd Nordin**, Consultant Paediatrician and Neonatologist

Breastfeeding is the most natural skin-to-skin contact between a mother and her baby. Mother's first breastfeeding may start as soon as within the first hour upon delivery. Mastering breastfeeding skills may need some practice and time, especially for first-time moms. However, with the key skill right from the start as below, breastfeeding is indeed easy.

1

Hold your baby against your chest. Keep your baby's ear, shoulder and hip aligned. This will make swallowing easier. Your nipple should point towards the baby's upper lip/nose. You can try tickling the baby's lips to encourage him to open his mouth wider. Your baby's head should be tilted slightly back.



2

Your baby should be latching on the nipple with his-mouth wide opened, chin dropped and tongues down. If the baby's mouth is not wide opened, try tickling the lip again with the nipple.



3

The lower lip of baby should be turned out with his chin touching the breast. More of the areola is visible above the baby's mouth than below.



Getting into position that is comfortable for you and baby will ease breastfeeding. Below are several types of breastfeeding holds.



Cradle hold

Easy and common hold that is comfortable for most mothers and babies

- Baby's head rests in the crook of your elbow.
- Make sure that your baby's head is not too far into the crook of your arm and your breast is not pulled to one side.
- Keep baby's back and bottom supported.



Cross cradle/ Transitional hold

Useful hold for premature baby or small baby with weak suck.

- Baby is held along the opposite arm from the breast you are feeding.
- Support your baby's head with your palm at the base of baby's neck.



Clutch or "football" hold

Allows mother to have a better view of baby's attachment to your breast. This position also allows you to keep the baby away from a C-section incision.

- Position your baby at your side, lying on his back with his head at the level of your nipple.
- Support baby's head with your hand.
- Use a pillow to support baby's back.



Side-lying position

Useful for mothers who had a C-section or to help mothers get extra rest.

- Position your body with your baby facing you.
- Make sure baby's nose is at the same level as your nipple so that he does not need to bend his neck to reach your breast.

Expressing breast milk

Many working mothers may worry that they may not be able to continue breastfeeding their baby when they return to work. Don't worry, as mothers can express their breast milk and stock up. Breast milk can be expressed by hand or breast pump.

Expressing by hand

- o Wash your hands well.
- o Gently massage your breast, stroking downwards towards the areola.
- o Hold your breast with one hand, not too close to the nipple. Lift your breast slightly, and gently press the breast inwards towards your chest.
- o Lightly compress your thumb and fingers together in rolling motion towards the nipple.
- o Relax your fingers for a couple of seconds then repeat the same motion. Do not squeeze the base of your nipple, as this will stop the flow of milk.



Press (back towards your chest)



Compress



Relax

Expressing by breast pump

Breast milk can also be expressed by using breast pump. Before you start, remember to sterilize all equipment and wash your hands. Every breast pump has different instructions when using, remember to refer the product manual before your start using breast pumps. If you are still in doubt, don't hesitate to contact your doctor or lactation consultant.

Storing breast milk

After expressing, store the milk appropriately. Each container should be labelled with the date and stored at the right temperature.

Method of storage	Duration of storage
Room temperature (25-37°C)	3-4 hours
Air-conditioned room (15-25°C)	8 hours
Refrigerator (2-4°C)	72 hours
Freezer compartment inside refrigerator (one-door fridge)	2 weeks
Freezer section of refrigerator with separate door (two-door fridge)	3 months
Separate deep freeze	6 months
Thawed in a refrigerator	24 hours (do not refreeze)

Parenting a new baby is an exciting time in life but it can be tiring and challenging. However, during the duration of breastfeeding, moms may encounter difficulties. Do not hesitate to look for help when you need it. Breastfeeding is like any newly learned skill and it does get easier with time. **PP**

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Malaysian Paediatric Association

Healthy Finger Foods

Young children especially toddlers like to explore everything using their hand or fingers especially their food. This is why serving finger-type foods is a great idea to help young children eat better. Here are two healthy and simple finger foods you can try to prepare for your child for his next snack time. Because these recipes are so simple, you can even ask your child to be involved in the preparation to learn healthy cooking and eat healthily!

Baked Crispy Chicken Fingers

(Serves 5-6)

Ingredients

350 g chicken breast, skin and bones removed
 200 g (2 cups) cornflakes, finely-crushed
 1 egg, lightly beaten
 16 g (1 tbsp) prepared mustard
 1 tsp honey
 Dash of flour
 Salt and pepper to taste
 Chili or tomato sauce (optional)

Method

1. Preheat oven to 230°C. Cut chicken into approx 4-inch strips. Thinly coat the chicken strips with dash of flour.
2. In a shallow dish, combine egg, honey, salt and mustard. In another dish, stir together cornflake crumbs and pepper.
3. Dip chicken strips into the egg mixture. Then roll chicken strips into the cornflake crumb mixture to coat thoroughly. Arrange chicken strips on an ungreased baking sheet.
4. Bake about 12 minutes, or until chicken strips are golden in color.
5. Serve with chilli or tomato sauce.



Nutrient Content Per Serving	
Calorie 208 kcal	Carbohydrate 29.7 g
Protein 16.3 g	Fat 2.7 g

Young chef's role

- Arrange chicken fingers on top of baking tray and coat chicken with cornflakes.



Banana Peanut Butter Roll Up

(Serves 4)

Ingredients

- 4 pieces spring roll wrappers (preferably the wet type, steamed)
- 200 g (2 whole) bananas, halved
- 50 g (3 tbsp) peanut butter
- 30 ml (2 tbsp) honey
- 30 g (1 tbsp) peanuts, crushed/chopped
- 2.5 g (1 tsp) corn starch, mixed with water

Method

1. Put banana in the middle of the wrapper
2. Spread peanut butter on the banana
3. Add some honey on top of peanut butter, followed by chopped peanuts
4. Roll the wrapper.
5. Fold; use the starch as a bond to hold your rolls. Put in freezer bag and freeze overnight (or at least 4 hours or so to make sure the banana is completely frozen).
6. Serve chilled.

Nutrient Content Per Serving	
Calorie 261 kcal	Carbohydrate 35.2 g
Protein 8.8 g	Fat 9.4 g



Young chef's role

- Peel and cut banana, coat banana with peanut butter and roll with spring roll wrappers

An educational collaboration with

Recipes courtesy of 'Buku Masakan Pilihan Pakar Pemakanan, Jilid 2: Resipi untuk Seisi Keluarga' by Nutrition Society of Malaysia. To purchase this recipe book which includes 100 recipes, please email: president@nutriweb.org.my



Nutrition Society of Malaysia

Smart in More Than Understanding Multiple Intelligence

Intelligence tests have become *de rigueur* these days. They are one of the most widely used inventions from the field of psychology and feature in diverse arenas- from scholarship applications and university entrance exams to army recruitment exercises.

Because IQ scores are a measure of intelligence, they are often viewed as a predictor of success in life. A high IQ is helpful as it has been shown to correlate with school success for children. However, it fails to predict how they will fare later in the real world. By itself, a high IQ does not guarantee that your child will stand out and rise above everyone else. So, is traditional IQ all it takes to succeed in life?

Bill Gates' is rumoured to be 180, Nicole Kidman's 132 and John Kennedy's 119. With such IQ scores, Bill Gates is considered a genius, Nicole Kidman categorised as gifted, and John Kennedy regarded as having superior intelligence.

This intelligence is reflected by the expertise of the athlete, dancer or actor (controlling body movement) as well as the sculptor, surgeon or dentist (handle objects skillfully). In children, a wide spectrum of physical abilities is displayed through this smart from athletics, dance, and gymnastics to martial arts. Body Smart children are greatly aware through touch and movement.

People Smart children possess an innate ability to understand and work with other people. They are able to interact and relate, enabling them to get along with others. They make good leaders and usually have lots of friends. In school, they will often be found leading a club or the student body. As children move into the adult world, this ability is particularly useful in the field of business. It has been quoted that managers spend more than half their time engaged in

interpersonal communication with bosses, subordinates and clients. Their "people skills" are important in ensuring the success of a business as it helps them mobilise others to work towards a common goal and understand the needs of customers.

What is Multiple Intelligence? ^{1,2}

The theory of multiple intelligences was developed by psychologist Howard Gardner and it proposes that there are many different ways of being smart. It challenges the current focus on verbal skills and logical thinking which is traditionally measured in IQ tests and graded in school examinations. Instead, the theory of multiple intelligences considers the whole range of human abilities so that it unlocks a child's learning potential and any child can be a winner in life.¹

One of the ways of being smart is termed as Brain Smart. Brain Smart includes either verbal intelligence or logical thinking. Verbal-linguistic children love words and exude speaking and/or writing strengths. They use words to persuade, argue or entertain. On the other hand, logical thinking covers a spectrum with mathematics on one end and science on the other. These children have a well-developed ability to reason and are at ease interpreting data and analysing patterns.^{1,2}

In ancient time, the body and mind were viewed as one. Our very own Eastern culture demonstrates the cultivation of the mind through bodily activities such as yoga, tai chi and aikido. This intelligence is also known as Body Smart. It is demonstrated by talent in controlling one's body movements and in handling objects skillfully.



One Way nce in Children

Although most children will identify strongly with one or two of the intelligences, they actually possess all. Psychologist and educator Thomas Armstrong believes that a combination of encouragement, enrichment and good instruction can enhance our children's strongest intelligence, as well as develop their moderate and underdeveloped intelligences.^{1,2}

Eating right

Early childhood is the most rapid period of development in a child's life.³ The years from birth to 8 years of age are important in the cognitive, emotional and physical growth of children.³ Good health and nutrition during childhood is especially important to support the multiple areas of development. Unfortunately, 1/3 of Malaysian children aged 1-10 years old are not consuming

the recommended daily nutritional needs. One of the ways to help ensure children receive sufficient nutrition is by consuming milk. Milk, according to the Malaysian Dietary Guidelines, is one of the most complete of all foods, containing nearly all the constituents of nutritional importance to humans.⁴ Children need adequate nutrition for physical growth and energy. Milk contains both protein and carbohydrates to aid in this aspect. As a rich source of calcium, intake of milk is also helpful during this phase when bone mass is being built. An active, well-built child can happily participate in sports and outdoor physical activities. In addition, well-nourished children will have stronger immune systems to fend off illnesses or recover faster. Being well allows children to be in school and interact with friends to develop social skills. Furthermore, the first few years of life are a period of "brain growth spurt". A child's brain and nervous system needs to receive optimal nutrition to develop and function well. In recent years, there has been great interest in understanding the role of nutrients such as docosahexaenoic acid (DHA) and arachidonic acid (AA) in cognitive development.⁵

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has recognized that good health and nutrition are important for children to achieve their full educational potential because nutrition affects intellectual development and learning ability.⁶ Encouraging children to drink milk, one of the most complete of all

foods, will aid in providing good nutrition. This serves as the platform for children to maximise their potential in multiple areas of development.

Multiple intelligence, multiple possibilities

Every child is unique and will exhibit the different kinds of smart to different degrees. Nurturing the multiple intelligences in your child helps unlock your child's learning potential. To build a foundation for learning and development, good health and nutrition is needed. Encourage your child to drink milk so that she receives the nutrition important for multiple areas of development.

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- Allergy
- Immunisation
- Paediatrics Issues
- Digestive Health

Beware the Threat of Meningococcal Meningitis

By **Dato^r Dr Musa Mohd Nordin**, Consultant Paediatrician and Neonatologist

Bacterial meningitis often has severe outcomes, ranging from serious post-recovery complications such as brain damage, hearing loss, or learning disabilities. However, a more serious outcome is death, which in meningococcal meningitis happens in 1 out of 10 cases.

Vaccines are available which can control invasive meningococcal disease, namely meningococcal conjugate vaccines (MCV) and meningococcal polysaccharide vaccines.



What is meningitis?

It is a serious infection of the thin lining called meninges that surrounds the brain and spinal cord.

Easy transmission

The bacteria, *Neisseria meningitidis* that cause this disease are easily passed from person-to-person. It spreads via:

- ▶ **close contact** (kissing, sneezing or coughing on someone),
- ▶ or **living with an infected person** (in places such as dormitories, or sharing eating or drinking utensils).

The average incubation period is four days, but can range between 2 - 10 days.



Common symptoms

There are slightly different signs/symptoms to watch out for in newborns and young children. Newborns/infants may not have the classic signs and symptoms of headache and stiff neck, or if these symptoms are present, they may present at a late stage. Here's what you should watch out for:

- High fever
- Constant crying
- Difficult to comfort
- Excessive sleepiness or irritability
- Inactivity or sluggishness
- Poor feeding
- A bulging fontanelle (the soft spot on a baby's head)
- Stiffness in a baby's body and neck

The following signs and symptoms may occur in children older than two years old:

- Sudden high fever
- Severe headache
- Stiff neck
- Vomiting or nausea with headache
- Confusion or difficulty concentrating
- Seizures
- Sleepiness or difficulty waking up
- Sensitivity to light
- Lack of interest in drinking and eating
- Purpuric rash

Factors that increase the risk of meningitis:

- ▶ **Age** – the young (e.g. infants, toddlers), adolescents, and the elderly are at higher risk from infection with *Neisseria meningitidis*.
- ▶ **Location** – places where large groups of people gather often make it easier for this disease to spread.
- ▶ **Travel** – visiting places that are endemic to meningitis exposes you to the bacteria. This includes the 'meningitis belt' in the sub-Saharan African region and travellers to Mecca during the annual Hajj and Umrah pilgrimage.

Prevention is better than cure!

Catching it early means a 90% chance of survival. However, there may be long-lasting (or even permanent) complications. The best thing to do is to prevent meningococcal meningitis by immunising against it. There are two 'types' of vaccines:

- The "old" meningococcal vaccine is polysaccharide-based. It is only effective in children above two years, has poor immune memory, and does not contribute to herd immunity.
- The newer meningococcal conjugate vaccines (MCV) protect children from six weeks onwards, induce immune memory, and confer protection to the community.

Vaccination should be seriously considered in order to protect your children, adolescents and the elderly from this very debilitating and not infrequently fatal disease. **PP**

An educational contribution by



Malaysian Paediatric Association



Imagine what your child could be in 24 years...



0-6

hours

Hour of onset

Early symptoms are non-specific¹

- Fever
- Nausea and vomiting
- Irritability
- Poor appetite or feeding
- Headache
- Sore throat/coryza



13-15

hours

Hour of onset

Classic symptoms are delayed¹

- Hemorrhagic rash
- Neck pain and stiffness
- Photophobia



16-24

hours

Hour of onset

Late symptoms can lead to death¹

- Confusion or delirium
- Seizure
- Unconsciousness

Invasive Meningococcal Disease

can **kill** in just **24 hours**¹.

Ask your Doctor about Meningococcal Vaccination



www.vaccinationisprotection.com/Infants_Children

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REFERENCE: 1. Thompson WW, et al. Lancet 2006;367:397-403

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IMPORTANT!

If your child develops a stiff neck (he is unable to rest his chin on his chest), has pink or red swelling behind his ear(s), or a fever above 40°C that does not go down within two hours after taking fever medicine, then see your paediatrician immediately.

Dealing with Earache

By **Datuk Dr Zulkifli Ismail**, President of Asia Pacific Paediatric Association (APPA) & Chairman of Positive Parenting Management Committee

Don't leave it to heal on its own – get your child checked as it may cause complications

Earache caused by infections commonly happens between the ages of six months and two years, but can continue happening until your child is an adult. The earache can range from mild discomfort to a very sharp, dull, or burning pain in or around your child's ears. It happens to children more than it does to adults as children have shorter and narrower Eustachian tubes that are also softer and more difficult to remain open (the Eustachian tube physically links the throat with the middle ear), and a less effective immune system.

The pain or discomfort from earache may be present all the time, or it may happen intermittently. It can also happen in either ear, or it can affect both ears at once. There are many possible causes for earache; some may affect the ear itself, while others may be caused by other conditions that affect the areas close to the ears.

Common causes of earache

These include:

- **Teething.**
- **Sore throat.**
- **Changes in air pressure** (e.g. taking a flight or driving through a hilly/mountainous area).
- **Fluid build-up in the middle ear** (the area behind the eardrum). Also known as glue ear, can cause some hearing loss in the affected ear(s).
- **Infection of the ear canal** (the area outside the eardrum). This condition is known as otitis externa and may be caused by an inflammation or infection of the area at the outer ear/ear canal.
- **A boil or an infected hair follicle in the ear canal.**
- **Skin conditions** can cause the ear canal to become inflamed. This includes conditions such as eczema and seborrheic dermatitis.
- **Physical injury to the ear canal.** This may be caused by foreign objects placed in the ear canal –even using cotton buds can damage the sensitive lining of the ear canal.
- **Blocked ear canal.** This may be in the form of earwax or foreign objects that the infant/toddler puts into his ear that becomes stuck.
- **Throat infections, tonsillitis, and colds** – these can spread to the middle ear, possibly causing otitis media or middle ear infection.

Recognising the signs

Some of the more common signs that indicate your baby may be suffering from an earache include:

Appearing hot and irritable

Pulling, tugging or rubbing the affected ear(s)

Poor feeding in babies, a loss of appetite in children

Running a high fever (over 38°C)

Problems sleeping (e.g. restlessness at night)

Coughing and runny nose

Unable to hear sounds as well as he normally does.

Problems with his balance (e.g. stumbling when he walks, swaying when sitting/standing upright, etc.)

Did you know?

Ear infections can occur as a single, isolated infection, but can also recur after the condition has cleared up. If this is the case, then you will need to exercise more caution in caring for your child to ensure that the ear infection does not happen regularly.

Earache can be treated

It is important that you stay vigilant to spot the signs of earache early. It is a treatable condition, and if nipped in the bud, will not lead to long-term complications. The most common cause of ear infections is a cold or the flu. These may cause your child's Eustachian tube to become swollen, thus blocking the flow of air to his middle ear. If your child has allergies, it may also cause a similar effect.

Bacterial infections are also a common cause for earache, and some of the most common bacteria found in infected middle ears are the same ones that cause sinusitis, pneumonia, meningitis, and other respiratory infections. It is possible to vaccinate your child against these by giving him the pneumococcal conjugate vaccine, which can be given to infants and toddlers to prevent deadly complications such as meningitis, pneumonia, and bacteraemia. **PP**

An educational contribution by

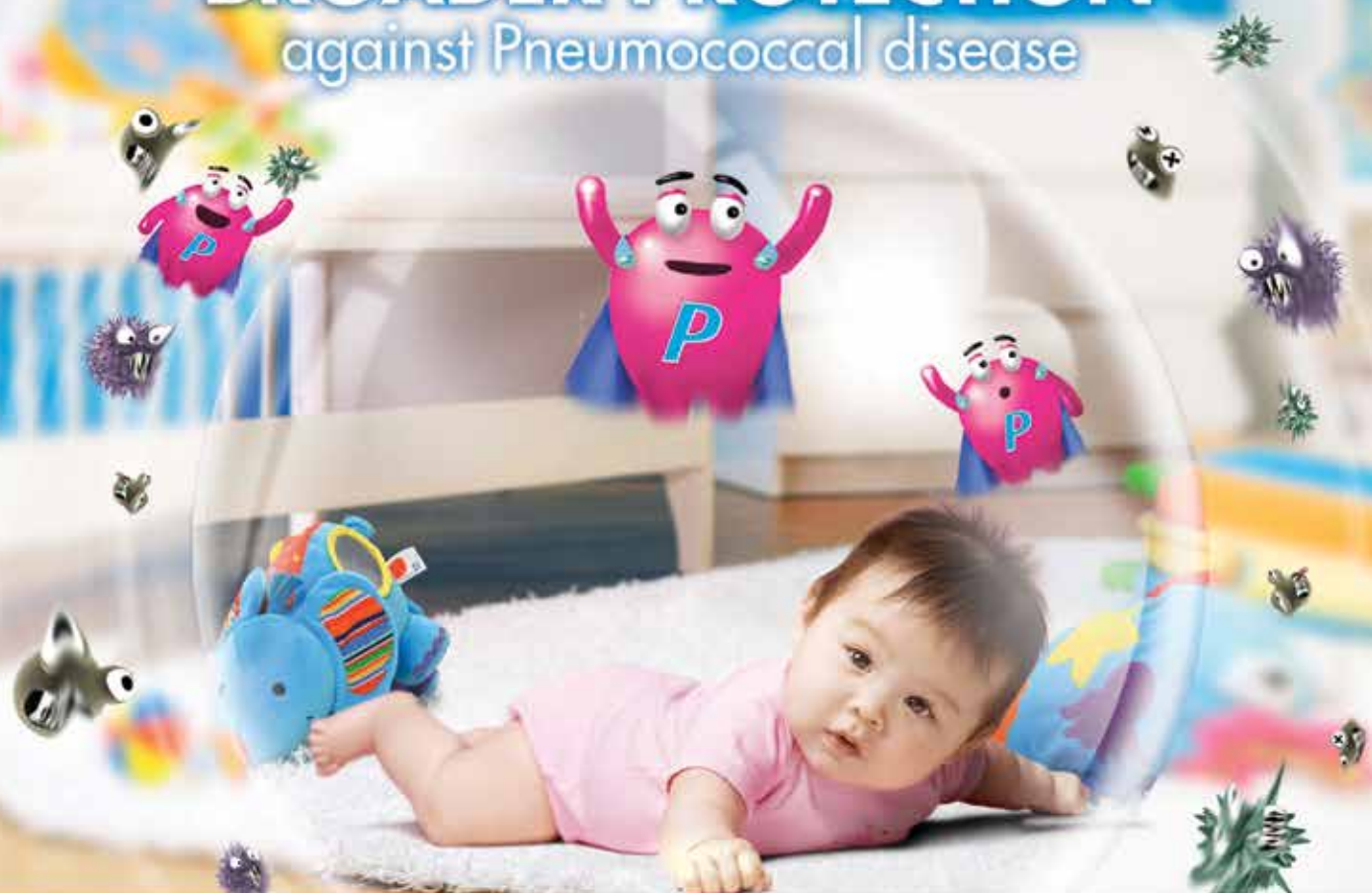


Malaysian Paediatric Association



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References: [1] Acute Respiratory Infections (Update September 2009): Streptococcus pneumoniae, World Health Organization, http://www.who.int/vaccine_research/diseases/ai/en/index3.html. [2] Pneumococcal Vaccine: What you need to know, WebMD Children's Vaccines Health Centre, <http://children.webmd.com/vaccines/pneumococcal-conjugate-vaccine-what-you-need-to-know>. [3] GAVI's PneumoADIP, Surveillance and Research Report (November 2007).

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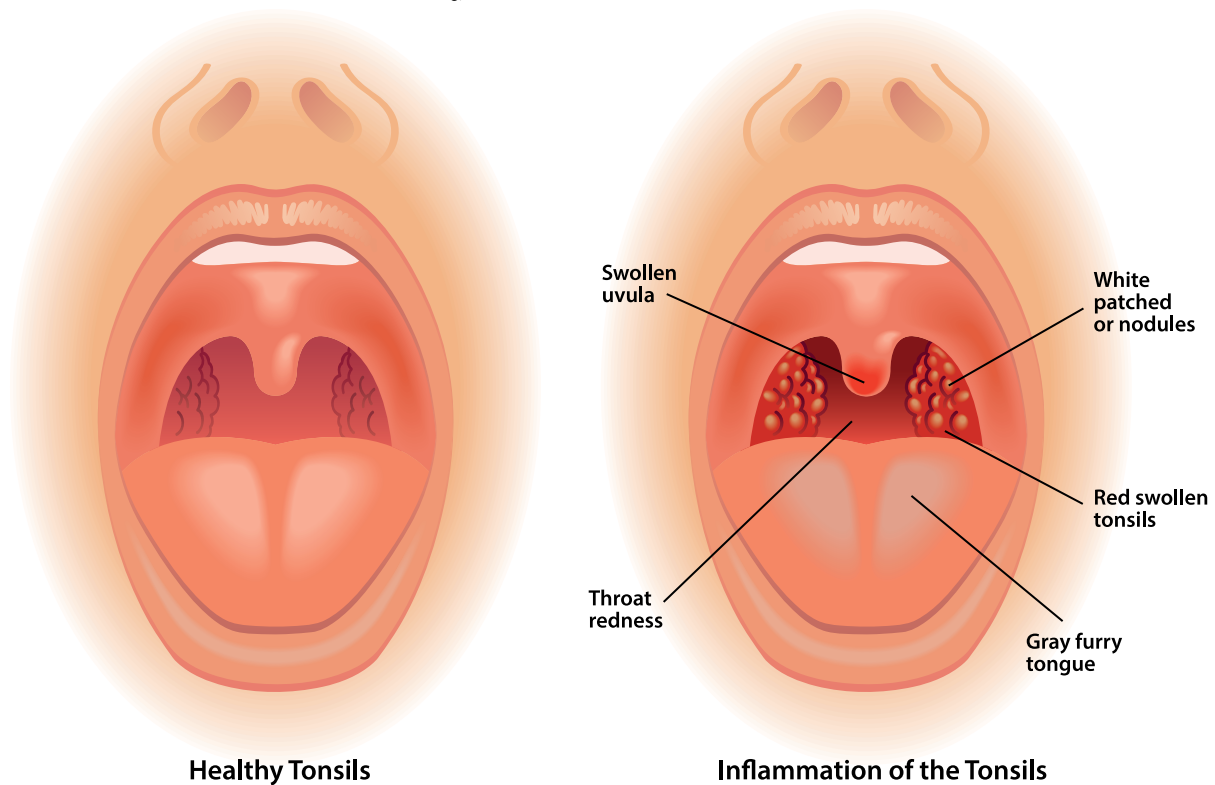
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Your Child's Tonsils

Get your child checked as it may be the precursor to pneumonia

By **Datuk Dr Zulkifli Ismail**, President of Asia Pacific Paediatric Association (APPA)
& Chairman of Positive Parenting Management Committee



Your child's tonsils can be found at the back of his throat, where it acts as a filter that traps germs, thus preventing them from entering his body and causing an infection. However, there may be times when the tonsils are infected and become swollen and/or inflamed – this condition is known as tonsillitis.

Recognising Tonsillitis

Tonsillitis can be a common occurrence in children. When it does occur, it may happen occasionally or it might be a recurring condition. Any kind of bacteria or virus can infect the tonsils and cause tonsillitis. The main symptoms are fever and sore throat, but there are other symptoms and signs to watch for, namely:

- Redness of the tonsils
- A white or yellow coating on the tonsils
- Painful blisters or ulcers on the throat
- Hoarseness or loss of voice
- Headache
- Loss of appetite
- Ear pain
- Difficulty swallowing or breathing through the mouth
- Swollen glands in the neck or jaw area
- Fever, chills
- Bad breath

Your child may also exhibit different symptoms such as:

- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Abdominal pain

Treating Tonsillitis

If your child has tonsillitis, make sure you consult with your paediatrician for treatment. Once your child's doctor has determined the cause, he will be able to take the appropriate steps to treat or alleviate the condition. If the tonsillitis was caused by bacteria, he may prescribe a course of antibiotics. However, if it was caused by a virus, your child's body will have to fight off the infection on its own. Strep throat will need to be treated with antibiotics to kill the bacteria *Streptococcus viridans* that causes it.

What you can do

Regardless of the cause of your child's tonsillitis, there are several things you can do to ensure that he is more comfortable, which includes:

- Ensuring that he gets enough rest
- Drink either warm or very cold fluids to help alleviate any throat pain
- Ensure that the humidity in your room is maintained (use a cool-mist vaporizer or humidifier for this)
- Let him gargle with a warm solution of salt and water
- Give appropriate fever medicine to relieve the pain.

Tonsil removal – not always necessary

Your child's tonsils have an important role to play in his immune system throughout his life, so it would be best not to remove them. Often, a 'wait-and-see' approach is best as the so-called benefits of tonsillectomy (surgery to remove the tonsils) may not actually be the right answer.

While tonsillectomy can reduce the frequency of your child's throat infections, his bouts of tonsillitis will probably occur less often as he grows older. The biggest drawback to tonsillectomy is that just like any surgical procedure, the operation itself is painful and its benefits are sometimes marginal at best.

So don't rush into having your child's tonsils removed just because he has frequent mild throat infections. In general, tonsillectomy should only be considered if your child's tonsils

become swollen to the point of obstructing his upper airway and/or causes difficulty eating/swallowing. A definite indication for adenotonsillectomy is obstructive sleep apnoea caused by enlarged tonsils and adenoids obstructing the upper airways. This causes the child to snore badly and also momentarily stop breathing, leading to coughing and spluttering after.

As long as his tonsillitis does not cause him undue distress (e.g. he is not sick, is able to breathe easily at night, and is able to sleep well) there is little reason to have them removed. **PP**

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Dealing with Child Constipation

By **Dr Nazrul Neezam**, Paediatric Gastroenterologist & Hepatologist

Almost everyone gets constipated at some point and it's a common condition amongst children. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, constipation is described as a delay or difficulty experienced during defecation, is present for two or more weeks, and causes significant distress to a child.

Usually, a child who has a bowel movement fewer than three times a week (or less often than he typically does) is constipated. Additionally, they may show a combination of other symptoms:

- Hard, dry and small stools
- Stomach pain and bloating
- Bleeding with bowel movements
- Pain and difficulty during stool evacuation
- Soiling accidents

Constipation in your child can be caused by various factors, more commonly:

- Withholding stool because of:-
 - o stress over potty training
 - o unwillingness to use the toilet he's not familiar with
 - o fear of a painful bathroom experience
 - o Inappropriate toilet seat size - Dangling of both legs and the feeling of falling into the bowl does not allow proper relaxation of the anal sphincter required for effective stool evacuation.
- A diet that's low in fibre or doesn't include enough liquids (or both).
- Lack of physical activity.
- Side effects of certain medications (i.e. high-dose iron supplements or narcotic pain medication).

Soiling

Medical professionals do not consider stool soiling (in underwear or pants) to be a medical condition unless the child is at least 4 years old. Soiling is involuntary; the child doesn't do it on purpose

Constipation in Babies

Normal breastfed infants may only have a bowel movement once a week. Other infants just have a slower (but normal) gut, so they don't evacuate their bowels very often. Occasional hard stools are also very common and it doesn't always mean your child is constipated.



If your child is constipated, these strategies may be helpful:

- Prepare plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables (i.e. prunes, apricots, pears), high-fibre cereals, whole grain breads, and a variety of beans and other legumes. Foods containing probiotics, like yogurt, can also promote good digestive health. Omega-3 fatty acids have also been known to promote healthy bowels (i.e. sardines, walnuts, soybeans).
- Encourage physical activity and accumulate at least 30 minutes of moderate intensity exercises a day (e.g. brisk walking, running, cycling). Younger children (infants) can get more exercise by having more 'tummy time' or you can help to massage their stomach. Moving the body keeps the bowels moving too.
- Give children aged 2 to 3 years small amounts of plain water up to 1 to 2 glasses and for 4 to 18 years old, 6 to 8 glasses.

If constipation persists despite above measures, you should consult your paediatrician.

- Your paediatrician will be able to recommend suitable medication to alleviate your child's symptoms as there are various types of medications (e.g. laxatives, stimulants and stool lubricant) available to effectively treat constipation. With proper monitoring, these medications are safe to be used in children.
- Toilet training is often an important component of treatment. Take the advantage of the physiological "gastro colic reflex". This is a reflex sensation to defecate after having main meals. Encourage your child to sit on an appropriately sized toilet bowl or potty after each main meal while you supervise. The aim of this strategy is to promote regular bowel opening habits. They may be apprehensive at first, but combining it with a bit of distraction and reward strategy (e.g. use "star chart"), it will work eventually in the majority of children.



Two Birds, One Stone

A healthy and balanced diet also helps improve digestive health, provides optimum nutrition, maintain weight and increases your child's overall health whilst hampering onset of non-communicable diseases (i.e. heart disease, obesity, and kidney failure).

Fortunately, chronic constipation secondary to significant medical conditions (e.g. Short-segment Hirschsprung disease, Hypothyroidism, Hypercalcaemia and Colonic dysmotility) are rarely encountered.

Nevertheless, babies and young children can't always explain what they're feeling, so no matter what the symptoms or complications are, if you're worried about your child's condition, don't wait – contact your doctor immediately. **PP**

Billions of Good Bacteria for a Healthy Digestive System

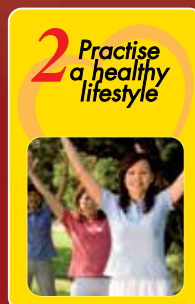
Why is your digestive health so important?

In Malaysia, diseases of the digestive system are the 5th principal cause of death and 7th principal cause of admission in government hospitals in 2011.*

A healthy digestive system is central to your overall health and wellbeing. Not only does it process food and transport important nutrients, vitamins, and minerals throughout your body, it is your body's first line of defence against diseases because 70% of your immune system lies in your digestive tract.

What can you do to improve your digestive health?

It's simple. What you need to do is to practise these simple steps TODAY!



Lactobacillus cultures (good bacteria)



Are all bacteria bad?

No, not all bacteria are bad for your health, there are good bacteria too. Your digestive tract is home to trillions of bacteria. A healthy digestive system should have a healthy balance of 85% good bacteria and 15% bad bacteria.

What happens inside?



- Good bacteria fights bad bacteria for nutrients



- Good bacteria blocks the growth of bad bacteria



- Good bacteria kills bad bacteria

What should you do when bad bacteria overpowers the good bacteria?

Unhealthy lifestyle, stress, unbalanced diet, aging, lack of exercise, consumption of antibiotics, and bacterial infection in the gut can cause microflora imbalance. You can replenish the good bacteria in your digestive system by consuming probiotics.

What are probiotics?

According to the World Gastroenterology Organisation, probiotics are live microbes that have been shown in controlled human studies to induce measurable benefits on intestinal health and immunity. **

* Data from the Ministry of Health, Health Facts 2012.
** Data from the World Gastroenterology Organisation.

Goodness of Probiotics

Probiotics can benefit your digestion if consumed regularly.

- Helps reduce risk of intestinal disturbances such as constipation, diarrhoea, ulcers, bloating, belching, bad breath, allergy, heartburn, and nausea
- Helps maintain a healthy bacteria balance by keeping the good bacteria in high levels
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- Helps replenish good bacteria after taking antibiotics
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Household Chores and Your Child

By **Dr Anjli Doshi-Gandhi**, Deputy Director-General (Policy),
National Population and Family Development Board Malaysia

Learning about responsibility begins at home.

Getting your child to help out with household chores on a regular basis can be beneficial for him to grow into a successful adult. This is due to a sense of self-worth and competency, and he will also be more responsible in other aspects of his life. Another benefit is that he will be more likely to have better self-esteem and it also makes him feel like a part of the family. Indirectly, this will teach him about the importance of family responsibility.

Getting started

Before starting off, there are several points to keep in mind, namely:

- ▶ The importance of chores (as parents, you must take the initiative and effort to teach your child how to do them).
- ▶ The household chores should be appropriate for his age/capability.
- ▶ He should be involved in choosing which household chores he will be in charge of.
- ▶ The younger you start your child off doing household chores, the easier it will be to get him to continue as he grows.
- ▶ It gives you an opportunity to spend time with him and to bond.
- ▶ It gives him the foundation for being a responsible adult.
- ▶ It lets him gain a sense of self-worth, accomplishment, living skills, and competency.
- ▶ It teaches him responsibility (doing chores without being told/reminded).

You can start coaxing your child by breaking up the household chores into simple tasks. Let him try doing them and see which ones he prefers. Remember, he will be more likely to continue doing household chores if it is done together as a family – working side-by-side together is much more enjoyable and can make the chores less arduous. Of course, failure to be responsible for his assigned chores must also have logical consequences, and similarly praise him when his chores are done well (don't be afraid to be specific).

Pitfalls to avoid

Try to make household chores more fun by encouraging your child with positive comments (such as “I love washing dishes with you. It feels great to have a clean kitchen.”)

You should also show him how you want the chores done correctly without patronising or belittling him. For instance, if he has made his bed improperly, you can tell him “You have an interesting way to make your bed. Would you like me to show you how I get the wrinkles out when I make my bed?”

As parents, you should encourage your child's efforts. In the beginning, you should focus on the process rather than the quality of his work. Your praise and your appreciation of his efforts will help him to feel that he is contributing important work to the family.



In order to encourage your child to persist in continuing to do his household chores, there are several important pitfalls that you should avoid, which include:

- ▶ **No such thing as perfection** – take a more relaxed approach in how you gauge his performance of his chores. Insisting on perfection will soon squash any enthusiasm he may have for it, making it an onerous duty that he will try to shirk.
- ▶ **No reason to delay** – your child is never too young to start! Most children are more capable than you think. However, be sure to start with simple things and progressing to more complex chores as you go. After all, the best way to learn is by seeing and doing.
- ▶ **Don't use chores as a punishment** – this will usually have negative results as it can lead to your child resenting and/or hating his chores.

Keeping the momentum

Now that you know what to avoid, it will be helpful if you also took some proactive steps to encourage your child. These include:

- ▶ **Remember to praise his efforts** – don't wait until he finishes it, praise and encourage him while he is doing it. This will help to build a positive momentum, especially if your child is still young.
- ▶ **Be consistent!** Make sure that your child follows through with his chores and don't step in to do it for him, otherwise, he will learn the wrong lesson (that putting off his chores means someone else will do it for him).
- ▶ **Give specific instructions** - for instance, if you tell your child to clean his room, this can be interpreted in different ways by different individuals. Be specific and give him instructions, e.g. tell him to put his clothes in his closet, his books back onto the shelf, and his toys back into their respective niches.

- ▶ **Take baby steps** – show him how you want it done step by step, then let him do it. Always ease him into any new chores. You may want to supervise him the first few times, but once he has got it right, you won't need to hover over his shoulder.
- ▶ **Take it easy** – nagging can have rather negative results, so try using the “when/then” technique (e.g. tell your child that when he has finished putting away his toys, then he can watch his cartoons).
- ▶ **Give him a choice** – list out all the household chores and let him to select the ones he prefers to do.

Should chores be tied to an allowance?

The key point to keep in mind is that chores are about responsibility and also imparting simple household skills to your child. With that in mind, it is generally a bad idea to give your child an allowance in exchange for household chores as this has negative connotations.

Doing so places the focus on the payoff for the chore instead of his contribution to the family. This will teach your child a negative lesson as he will miss the whole point of doing household chores and instead start to ask “What's in it for me?”

Allowing allowances

Yes, it is important that your child learns how to handle money. You can give your child an allowance to teach him simple money-management skills, but do not mix the two (allowances and chores) together as it will muddy the issue.

Don't equate doing household chores with ‘earning’ money, especially with younger kids. However, this concept may be an exception for older children as earning extra allowance for doing extra chores (especially those that are not a part of his normal chores) can be a good motivating factor.

Chores should be age-appropriate

If you are unsure of the types of chores you can assign, here are some ideas you can put to immediate use:

ages 2 to 3	ages 4 to 5	ages 6 to 7	ages 8 to 9
Put his toys away	Any of the chores from the left hand column	Any of the chores from the left hand columns	Any of the chores from the left hand columns
Fill a pet's food dish	Make his bed	Sort laundry	Help make dinner
Put his clothes in the laundry basket	Empty a dustbin/ wastepaper basket	Sweep the floor	Make own snacks
Wipe up spills	Bring in the mail/ newspaper	Set and clear table	Wash table after meals
Help to wipe dust	Clear the dishes from the dining table	Keep bedroom tidy	Put away own laundry
Organise books and magazines	Gardening (pulling weeds, watering plants, etc.)	Put away groceries	Make own breakfast

Remember, this is a learning process for your child. Always encourage his initiative and encourage him to have more personal responsibility. **PP**

An educational contribution by



‘Paw’-sitive Interactions

By **Assoc Prof Dr Alvin Ng Lai Oon**, Clinical Psychologist and Founding President of the Malaysian Society of Clinical Psychology (MSCP)

Research demonstrates that human-animal interaction benefits physical, emotional, and social wellness in children.



For most children, pet ownership can contribute significant developmental effects, counter anxiety and depression as well as teach various lessons in life. But it's good to remember that pets don't teach values, ideas or morals to your child, you do – they (pets) are merely vessels which you use to point them out.

Choosing A Pet

Animals that more naturally interacts with and elicits a caring response from your child will be the most effective pets. This is why most of the time we will gravitate towards animals with the “cuddle factor” (i.e. cats, dogs, hamsters, etc.). Nevertheless, it isn't uncommon for certain children to find comfort in ornamental animals such as fishes, iguanas, terrapins, and so on. What's important is to provide sufficient parental guidance. Of course you should also always use common sense and keep your choices age-appropriate.

The Triple C.A.R.E: How Pets Affect Your Child's Well-Being

Pet animals are great facilitators of learning that can be summarised into what I call the Triple C.A.R.E of self-development, social development and mental development:

C.A.R.E #1

The first C.A.R.E stands for **Compassion, Affection, Responsibility** and **Efficacy** in self-development. Pets help children to develop compassionate behaviours and show affection towards their pets. This in turn facilitates their personal development into a kind, gentle and friendly person. Children also learn to be more responsible by caring for their pets and this can lead to a better sense of self-efficacy and confidence in daily problem solving.

C.A.R.E #2

The next C.A.R.E focuses on social development and these are **Connection, Acknowledgement, Relating** and **Empathy**. Pets act as good transitional objects for children providing them with a sense of safety, security and comfort. It helps your child make the emotional transition from dependence to independence. Pets also don't judge, nor do they laugh or make fun of your child when he/she makes a mistake. This helps your child to

gradually build their self-esteem and confidence. Connecting with pets also teaches your child about mutual relations, especially in developing unconditional positive regards towards each other. Pets also provide opportunities for lessons about life; reproduction, birth, illnesses, accidents, death, bereavement, compassion and empathy.

A pet provides comfort and companionship in times of fear and loneliness as well as helping children deviate or forget for a moment the troubles they have in coping with their new environment at school, day care, or what not. It helps them balance their feelings and return to a more positive state-of-mind.

C.A.R.E #3

The third C.A.R.E covers cognitive or mental development where **Cognitive abilities, Applied learning, Reflective skills** and **Emotional regulation** are key. The child improves in cognitive abilities with more and more applied learning fuelled by their constant fascination and attraction to their pets. This applied learning from daily experiences sets the stage for reflective skills to be developed especially in learning about consequences of actions and thoughts in caring for- and interacting with their pet. Reflective skills also go hand in hand with emotional regulation where children experience and learn how they should respond in relation to their pets' behavioural and emotional expressions.

Additionally, much of the daily adaptive behaviour skills such as communication, daily routines, motor abilities, personal care, domestic skills, and community-related skills are also strengthen while socialization skills such as making friends, play skills, and social problem-solving are also reinforced.



Important!

Keep pet-oriented tasks age-appropriate to ensure the safety of your child as well as the pet both physically and emotionally.

Be Prepared, Be Absolutely Ready

Parents need to carefully weigh in the costs and benefits of having a pet in the family. While the experience of having a pet for your child may help to enhance the family's collaborative strengths, a lack of could contribute towards systemic distress within the family. Bringing a pet into the family is not a decision to be made lightly. Remember, pet animals are not consumables you can simply throw away once they've served their purpose – they're part of the family & should be treated as such. **PP**

An educational contribution by



Malaysian Society of Clinical Psychology

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My Positive Teen

- Socio-emotional
- Conditions and Diseases

Preventing Teen Runaways

By **Dr Nazeli Hamzah**, President of the Malaysian Association for Adolescent Health (MAAH)

For a teenager struggling with a difficult situation at home or at school, running away may seem like the only way to escape.

In Malaysia, such as it is elsewhere in the world, the majority of missing/run away children come from family conflicts (i.e. domestic violence, parent drug/sex abuse, neglect, etc.) and peer influence, but there are other reasons:

Critical Factors Leading to Children Go Missing / Run Aways

Critical Factors Push Factors	Category Factors
The Individual	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enjoys excessive entertainment• Disobeys advice• Mischievous (steal/gamble) and moody• Fear of being remanded by parents upon returning home
Family	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conflict between parents• Parent's divorce• Lack of compassion among family members• Poverty within families (financial issues)• Physical and emotional abuse from parents
Residential atmosphere	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Unhealthy neighbourhood• Lack of facilities in the house
Pull Factors	
Community environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cyber Cafes and video games• Shopping Complexes
Fellow peers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• With bad company• Fleeing with boyfriend• Involved in drugs and promographic materials

** Push Factor: repellent issues driving teens away

** Pull Factor: issues/things that attract teens to run away



Teens that run away from home are exposed to things like drugs, alcohol, sexual violence, and physical violence that may result in poor mental health. In addition, the children may feel the direct impact of physical and emotional distress due to lack of family support, or financial constraints.

Signs that your teen may be considering running away:

- Extreme mood swings or rebelliousness.
- Very low self-esteem.
- Becomes unresponsive, isolates himself and goes into a depressive state.
- Withdrawal from society (e.g. friends and family).
- Sudden drop in school grades and increased incidences of truancy.
- Notable change in appearance, such as major weight loss or lack of attention to personal hygiene.
- Lying or stealing.
- Drug or alcohol use.
- Has a suicidal tendency.
- In possession of a dangerous weapon or paraphernalia.

Studies Show

Children are more prone to deviant behaviour such as running away from home when parents lack the skills in minding and showing their affection, or are harsh and inconsistent.

Preventing The Problem

- Mend relationships before it turns into a crisis. Whatever the argument, always reassure them of your unconditional love.
- Be a good listener and empathize towards their problems.
- Argue maturely, your teen will appreciate it.
- Create a trusting parent-child relationship by allowing them certain age-appropriate freedoms and provide more opportunities for them to discover themselves and explore broader possibilities.
- Ask them about their day, what's troubling them, know their friends or discuss any intimate issues.
- Teach problem solving and coping skills (i.e. responsibility, accountability, etc). Make sure they know that it's better to confront a problem than run away from it.
- Make them feel comfortable approaching you for support, guidance and advice when they need it – don't be overly judgemental or condescending.
- Identify the triggers that lead to risky decisions and take pre-emptive actions to avoid it manifesting even further.
- Never dare your child to run away.



How To React/Respond When/If They Return

- Don't go into details yet but let them know you've been worried and you need to talk about what's been happening.
- Don't say things like "I knew you'd have to come crawling back!" Even if it's tempting to convince them that you were right or your ideas were better. Be the adult and apply more persuasive language.
- If your teen comes home late, don't scold or beat them. Instead, employ poise, patience and creative wisdom. It's not a sign of weakness; it's actually a display of maturity in authority which commands your child's respect without having to lift a single finger.
- Try to work together on ways to make things different and don't avoid the problem that led to your teen running

away in the first place. The key to all good relationships is toleration, communication, understanding and no small amount of trust, so don't be too over-protective or egotistical.

- Talk about the problem, not the person – don't play the 'blame game'.
- If your teen refuses to talk to you or you can't seem to get anywhere, get someone whom you and your child both respect to mediate the discussion.

Don't Worry

Sometimes even the best of us make mistakes & say/do things we don't mean in the 'spur of the moment'. It doesn't mean you're a bad parent.

Parents, first and foremost, need to equip themselves with positive parenting skills, stress management, communication and listening skills. Keep working on your relationship and involve them more in setting up rules around the house. Running away can be a sign that something is seriously wrong; so don't be ashamed to seek professional help. **PP**

An educational contribution by



Malaysian Association for
Adolescent Health

Congratulations!

To winners of the contest

#100QualityMoments

for the month of **August and September**

First Prize Winner



Walter Goh (left) from Segambut

Stand a chance to win exciting prizes in just three simple steps:

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For enquiries, please contact the Secretariat at **03 – 5632 3301**

Consolation Prize Winner



Ayu Rafikah (left) from Shah Alam



Yeang Lai Ching (left) from Segambut

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Positive Parenting

Malaysia's Pioneer Expert-Driven Educational Programme

Initiated in year 2000 by the Malaysian Paediatric Association (MPA), the Positive Parenting programme offers experts advice and guidance by key healthcare professionals from various Professional Bodies in the field of child health, development and nutrition, teen issues as well as family wellness.

We understand the challenges parents face in raising a child and that is why we bring together expert organisations through this programme via its many activities to support you throughout your journey.

It is our vision to bridge the gap between the healthcare professionals and parents to empower you with unbiased, accurate and practical information.

Together, we can give our children the best start in life to ensure a brighter future.

Key activities of PP

• Positive Parenting Guide:



Published quarterly, it is distributed through a network of healthcare professionals in private and government clinics and hospitals as well as selected kindergartens nationwide.

• Website:



www.mypositiveparenting.org: One-stop digital portal with hundreds of articles, recipes and easy access to paediatricians.

• Facebook:



Follow us on Facebook to gain access to the latest parenting tips and updates from the Experts.

• Educational press articles:



Look out for our dedicated 'Positive Parenting' columns every fortnight and monthly in Malaysia's leading English, Bahasa Malaysia and Chinese newspapers.

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Tel: 03 56323301 E-mail: parentcare@mypositiveparenting.org
www.mypositiveparenting.org