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# Positive Parenting

PP13746/06/2013 (032586)

## Instilling Soft Skills in Adolescents

Your Kid, The Bully!

Why Do a Mammogram?

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Child Development



**Datuk Dr Zulkifli Ismail**

Chairman, Positive Parenting Management Committee and Consultant Paediatrician & Paediatric Cardiologist



# Positive Parenting

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# Academic Success is Only One Piece of the Puzzle

*As parents, we naturally want our children to succeed in life. One of the ways that we push them is in their academic performance. However, just academic success alone is not enough to ensure that your child will succeed later in life. Other aspects play an equally critical role, namely something called 'soft skills', which refers to his ability to have traits such as teamwork, communication, responsibility, integrity, courtesy, professionalism, flexibility, etc.*

*For a working adult, these soft skills are often of greater importance than how many distinctions one has scored, yet strangely, very little emphasis is placed upon them in our pursuit of academic excellence. It is with this in mind that we have included an article on the importance of teaching your child soft skills. We hope that the tips and ideas contained within this article will benefit you in your quest to ensure that your child grows up to be a successful adult. In order to achieve this, striking a positive balance between soft skill mastery and academic excellence is vital.*

*We have also included some words of wisdom from trusted professionals that highlight some useful tips on dengue, the role of probiotics in a healthy child, the importance of play in child development, tips and advice on recognising if your child is a bully and how to deal with it, issues on child health such as the importance of travel vaccines, and how to empower teens to take control of their sexual and reproductive health.*

*In conclusion, we wish you great success in your journey as a parent. Our greatest hope is that your child grows and prospers in a safe and healthy environment. Lastly, we hope that this issue will be of use in your continuing 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 at [www.mypositiveparenting.org](http://www.mypositiveparenting.org).*



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# Instilling Soft Skills in Adolescents

*As parents, we often want the best for our children. Many parents push their children to strive in terms of their academic skills, but in this day and age, just having a strong background in traditional 'hard' skills like writing, mathematics and science alone is not enough.*

With the job market becoming more competitive, how can you as a parent, ensure that your child maintains a competitive advantage? There is no doubt that he needs to complete his studies, yet just having paper qualifications alone is no longer enough. With increasingly larger emphasis being placed by employers on 'soft' skills, this is an oft overlooked aspect of a child's upbringing.

## What are soft skills?

These are the skills which characterise one's relationships with others and includes how one approaches life and work. Some of the other phrases which you may be more familiar with include 'people skills', 'interpersonal skills', or 'social skills'.

At the workplace, you can see it reflected in a person's attitude toward work and their level of professionalism. Needless to say, young people who have these skills would stand a better chance of performing better in school and once they go out job-hunting, their chances of succeeding in the adult world are higher as well. Supportive relationships between a teenager, and their family, friends, and other caring adults can provide a foundation for developing positive soft skills to face stressful years. **PP**

**Lack of emotional steadiness, violent impulses, unreasonable conduct, lack enthusiasm and sympathy... previous selfhood is broken up... and a new individual is in the process of being born. All solvent, plastic, peculiarly susceptible to external influences...**

G. Stanley Hall (1846 –1924) an American psychologist and educator who is acknowledged as the "father of adolescent psychology", describes adolescence.

# Instilling Soft Skills in Adolescents

## All work and no play...



*It is very common for today's child to have little chance to simply be a child. Most children are busy with school, after-school activities, homework, extra classes for music, maths, etc. Odds are high that if you ask any school-going child whether they enjoy going to school, you will get a resounding 'NO!'.*

The key is not to drown your child in academic-related activities. Try diversifying things a little. Instead of filling your child's spare time with studies or study-related activities (tuition, extra classes, etc.), encourage him to join team sports such as football or basketball. Even a club/society that is not sports-oriented such as debate teams or uniformed societies (e.g. *Kadet*, Scouts, Red Crescent, St John's Ambulance, etc.) give him plenty of opportunities to grow.

These clubs, societies, and sports are some of the best places for your child to learn about important things such as teamwork and decision-making. Working on projects or activities will also teach them the importance of working together toward a common goal. Another route that offers plenty of opportunities to beef up on their soft skills includes performing volunteer work or services.

### Why are soft skills important?

Learning soft skills is a life-long process, and by starting as early as you can, you will help prepare your child to succeed in not just his academic life, but also in the workplace. It should come as no surprise that many adolescents experience difficulties during their transition from their academic life to their adult life at the workplace.

After all, many youths have never been exposed to the realities of working as an adult. Some of the little things that they need to learn about are the importance



of being on time for work, meeting deadlines, informing their superiors if they cannot go to work due to an illness, and getting along with their fellow workers. By providing your child with the necessary soft skills, he will be able to thrive by adapting to changing circumstances. Additionally, he will also be more willing to learn from his experiences.

### Important soft skills for adolescents

There are five important soft skills your child/adolescent requires:

1. **Teamwork:** For your adolescent to thrive and function efficiently and appropriately in groups, he must be able to work together with other people. Incorporating group work into classroom activities where each teenager is responsible for a specific job or outcome helps to foster integrity. This includes the ability to accept constructive criticism and to be willing to face his faults or short-comings in order to improve. People who are unable to successfully collaborate in groups will find it challenging to succeed not just in college, but once they go out and work as well. After all, almost every job includes some level of interaction/collaboration with others!



**Tip:** Help your adolescent develop the necessary skills by encouraging him to participate in activities where collaboration with others plays a large role, e.g. team sports/athletics or other uniformed societies. Even science clubs can be a great place to learn about collaboration, if they emphasise team-based projects or hold volunteer services/activities.

2. **Communication/interpersonal skills:** The digital age may have made the world a smaller place, but it is also responsible for making the next generation more aloof. This often shows in face-to-face communications as they are less able to effectively carry on a conversation. Some even struggle with simple conversational tasks such as asking questions, active listening and maintaining eye contact.



**Tip:** Make it a point to limit their use of digital gadgets. While social media has its uses, they can stifle a child/adolescent's ability to socialise in face-to-face situations. A good rule is to have daily family time where digital gadgets are NOT welcome. This daily family time can be around the dining table, or even weekend excursions to spend more quality time with each other. Spend as much time as a family together – the only rule is to be sure that everyone puts their handphones, iPads, and other tech-toys away! You may even want to get your adolescent involved with speech or drama clubs or even societies such as Toastmasters, where he can build up his self-esteem and self-confidence via public speaking. Guide him to behave in a respectful and courteous manner to not only adults, but also his own peers on a daily basis. The same should also apply to online communication.

3. **Problem-solving:** Adolescents will face a number of unexpected challenges in life and often do not receive any aid in overcoming them. Learning how to solve problems is a skill that will stand your adolescent in good stead, regardless of whether it is during his academic life or when he ventures into the workplace. He should be able to solve problems in creative ways or find solutions that are out-of-the-box.



**Tip:** Rather than relying on rote learning alone, send him for experiential learning classes (or learning by doing). Debate clubs are also a great way to encourage his problem-solving abilities as he will need to deal with unfamiliar situations.

4. **Managing time/prioritising tasks:** There is a rigid structure in place at schools, and by the time your adolescent leaves, he must be able to organise his own studies (at institutes of higher education) or his work (once he joins the workforce). Being able to complete all of his assignments, projects, or any related work in a timely manner is a critical skill that will ensure that he is able to not only manage his time, but also to prioritise and finish the more urgent tasks first.



**Tip:** Instilling responsibility in teenagers can be very challenging. One of the best ways to develop this skill is simply by doing, so allow him to assume responsibility in several areas during school. This is especially important for his first interview, as employers usually prefer candidates who not only have good results, but are also active in extracurricular activities. For example, avoid a blanket punishment if your child/adolescent submits his school work late. Instead ask him to explain why the work was not completed and what he will do to remedy the situation in the future. Make him take responsibility for his shortcomings and encourage him to work on improving his time management.

5. **Leadership:** These skills are crucial in more ways than one. Not only should a good leader function well in a group, he should also be able to step up when necessary. The tricky thing about leadership is that it is actually a combination of soft skills. All the earlier soft skills are a necessary part of becoming a leader, so ensuring that your adolescent develops them will certainly ensure that he has a better chance to succeed in the adult world.



**Tip:** Encourage him to be more active in extracurricular activities. While some of the best leadership training he can get will be from uniformed societies, there are many possibilities with the other clubs/societies. Even sports can afford him an opportunity to pick-up leadership skills, e.g. captain of the football team, president of the English society, etc..He should also be encouraged to carry out volunteer activities in the community. **PP**

# Instilling Soft Skills in Adolescents

## It All Begins From Home...



*The best place for your child to get started on soft skills is at home. Remember, a child typically learns by emulating those around him, so the family has a critical role in moulding him. He will learn what the expected behaviours are and you can take it a step further, by teaching him about the implicit and often unspoken rules that adults abide by.*

By extension, this knowledge will serve your adolescent well during his college years and subsequently, when he becomes a working adult. Having the necessary soft skills will certainly make it easier for him to integrate with not only his peers, but also the various other age groups and personalities that he will encounter.

### Pre-adolescents

If it is not too late, get started with younger children. Here are some useful methods you can practise at home:

- **Play games as a family:** this can be anything from board/card games (e.g. congkak, Uno, Old Maid, Monopoly) or even sports (e.g. badminton, basketball, table tennis). It may not be readily apparent, but board/card games help teach him about cooperation, taking turns, following rules, controlling emotions, and learning new knowledge and skills.
- **Encourage him to express himself clearly:** use your smartphone to record him explaining something (e.g. something he loves doing such as reading or playing a computer game). Watch the recording together with him and give him feedback on what he did well or what he can improve on.
- **Talk about movies:** after watching a TV show or movie, take some time to talk about it. You can look at events leading up to the movie characters actions, how they handled their emotions (e.g. anger, sadness, etc.), whether it was appropriate (or not), and share strategies for how he should deal with his emotions in relation to the movie, e.g. staying calm by breathing deeply for a ten-count.
- **Hello, this is me:** Teach him appropriate telephone etiquette (e.g. identifying himself when placing a call, how to take messages, and even how to make calls). Some of the things which you need to get across are emergency numbers, when to call them, when NOT to call them, and what to say when calling.
- **The ins and outs of privacy:** Teach him about boundaries, personal space, and privacy. What they all encapsulate is the concept of respect. This will apply not only to himself but to



others as well. In the real world, this can translate into simple things such as knocking and asking for permission to enter someone else's room. Here, the door represents a 'boundary' that separates shared space (the room/corridor outside) from personal space (e.g. another person's room or office). Knocking and getting permission also implies respect for that person's privacy. As long as your child understands them, he will have an easier time getting along with others.



## Tips to parents with younger children

- **Read to them:** the best are stories that involve emotions/feelings. Be sure to discuss the story with them to ensure that they understand the concepts involved.
- **Take them out for play dates:** This helps introduce the concept of teamwork/collaboration to them.
- **Give them chores:** this will help to promote a sense of responsibility and allows him to feel like a contributing member of the family.
- **Teach them empathy:** Teach him about the importance of empathising with others and being sympathetic.
- **Get creative:** Encourage him to draw, sing, dance or be involved with any creative activity.
- **Give 'n take:** Life is all about balance, so teaching him about give and take is an essential lesson. Even a simple game of checkers or congkak can teach children about elements such as give and take, taking turns, and interacting with others.
- **Encourage curiosity:** all children are naturally inquisitive, so you should encourage and guide this trait in a positive manner. Try to answer all his questions, and if the timing is not right, let him know that you will get back to him. This will indirectly teach him to apply his curiosity at the right time and place, e.g. answering his questions in the middle of a movie at the cinema will disrupt the other movie-goers enjoyment of the show.

## What soft skills should you focus on at home?

As parents, you should be aware of your child's strengths and weaknesses. By building upon his strengths, you will greatly aid him in developing it further.

His weaknesses should not be neglected either. The key here in dealing with him is love and acceptance. Reassure him that you love him, regardless of his strengths and flaws. By accepting him as he is, it will be easier to reach out to him and to guide him to enhance his soft skills.

Some of the soft skills that you can work with your child/ adolescent include:

- **Communication skills:** here is one great way to put your smartphone to good use! Making videos of him talking or interacting with others is a great way for you to show him what he is doing right or wrong. Be sure to give him constructive criticism or it may backfire. This method is also a great way for him to prepare for making speeches at school events/ functions, getting ready for an interview (either for entry to university/college or for a job), or just doing it for fun (tell him he just won an Oscar and needs to give a thank you speech)! You can review it with him later to see how he did; was his speech/articulation succinct? Was he able to put his points across clearly? What about his body language; was it relaxed and confident? There are many other factors such as facial expression, posture, the usage of gestures to emphasise his points, etc.
- **Language proficiency matters:** Reading is not a favourite Malaysian pastime, yet it is certainly the most efficient way to build up your child/adolescent's vocabulary. If reading is not his forte, it is still possible to improve his vocabulary. Try injecting an element of fun into it by using online resources such as Word of the Day – just do a quick online search and you can find online dictionaries which offer this feature. Make it more of a challenge by asking him to use the word in his conversation with you; this can quickly turn a boring word lesson into some wacky fun with words as you try to outdo each other!
- **Hitting the right notes and volume:** Encourage your child/adolescent develop his voice by varying and controlling his pitch, rhythm, tempo, timbre, and volume. Many people tend to neglect this simple yet vital aspect of communication. Having a great vocabulary is good, but unless he can deliver his message effectively, it is of little use. This is a powerful communication tool which will serve him well in his adult life. Just imagine if your adolescent goes for a job interview and finishes it off by saying "This opportunity to work with you is truly very exciting!" – but delivers it with little inflection and in a monotonous voice!  
You may need to start younger children on volume control first, e.g. when to use loud voices, when to speak softly, or self-control (when not to speak). Encourage older children to read you their favourite stories. You can pitch in by supplying the 'voice' of

some of the characters. Adolescents may find all this boring, so it's time to up the ante – make him give you oral reports of his day/week or make a 'sales pitch' for why he needs to use the car for the weekend. Think of different ways to not only make him express himself, but to do so effectively.

- **Work on non-verbal communication:** A lot of our day-to-day communication involves non-verbal cues. Most kids have learnt to interpret their parent's non-verbal cues (e.g. the 'look' that says "Finish your homework before you even think about asking to watch your show!" or the 'stare' that says "Don't you dare ask me for ice cream when you haven't even finished your dinner!")

However, are they able to convey as much non-verbally? One of the most important aspects of non-

verbal communication starts with making eye contact. Remember, encouraging your child/adolescent to look you in the eye does not mean you are encouraging him to challenge your authority; rather, you are encouraging him to be more self-confident.

Be sure to encourage lots of eye contact in your communication with your child/adolescent and also proper posture while standing or sitting at home. Taking videos with a smartphone is also a great way to show him any bad non-verbal cues he may exhibit, such as poor posture or if he has any particular fidgeting habits that are unsightly. Remind him that a proper posture conveys self-confidence to anyone who sees him, and first impressions to count, especially in interviews. **PP**

# Instilling Soft Skills in Adolescents

## Life After School

*There is absolutely no doubt that every child needs an education. This will help prepare them for further studies in college/university or prepare them to join the workforce. However, while every parent wants their children to excel in school, you should be aware that academic performance alone is not enough.*

In order to truly prepare your adolescent for success in higher education and also life as a productive adult, a solid knowledge-base in 'hard' skills (e.g. maths, science) are just the basics. Your adolescent's future success in life and in his career will largely depend upon his ability to relate with other people, i.e. his soft skills. These are the skills that will determine how far he can go. Without them, his potential for growth will be limited.



### Be all that he can

By helping your child/adolescent develop his soft skills early, he will have a better chance to hone them. Just like any other skill in life, practise does make perfect, so don't force him to focus all his time on pure academic pursuits – make sure you slot in some time for him to develop his soft skills too.

This is especially important for adolescents as it will give them the chance to 'find' themselves by actively participating in their own development process. You should encourage your child/adolescent to learn how to think for himself. With the proper guidance, he will learn how to solve problems, make decisions, manage emotions, and be able to adapt to situations beyond his comfort zone.

This is one of the most powerful means of empowerment that any child/adolescent can have. However, developing the necessary soft skills takes time and effort, so get your child/adolescent started as early as you can. **PP**

# Child Development

- Problems
- Socio-emotional

## Anxiety Disorders In Children

By **Dr Phang Cheng Kar**, Consultant Psychiatrist

Some amount of anxiety is normal and can even be motivating. It helps us stay alert, focused, and ready to do our best. But anxiety can become overwhelming and in severe cases, interfere with a child's life (e.g. school performance and peer relationships). Left untreated or ignored, it can manifest to become anxiety disorders, the most common mental health disorders diagnosed in childhood and adolescence.

Scientists have yet to fully understand the cause of anxiety disorders. The development of childhood anxiety disorders is determined by a combination of different aspects such as neurobiological, environmental, social, and genetic factors.

There are many different types of anxiety disorders. These are some of the most common:

*It's natural for unfamiliar or challenging situations to prompt feelings of anxiety or nervousness in people of all ages. Kids feel nervous too, especially when facing an important test or switching schools, for example.*

### Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD)

Individuals with GAD have excessive, unrealistic fears about day-to-day activities (e.g. great fear of making mistakes, failing in examination, contracting disease, safety). They often have "what if" concerns that occupy their thoughts because they worry too much.

As a result, children with GAD take few risks; they are not keen to try new things and are quick to give up if they feel they are not good at something. Parents will need to constantly reassure them as they take small steps forward.

### Panic Disorder/ Attacks

Panic attacks are unpredictable and can cause feelings of impending death, heart attack-like symptoms, going crazy, losing control, and a disconnection from reality. Many kids with panic disorder avoid the locations of previous episodes and other places where help would not be available or escape would be difficult – i.e. enclosed or crowded places.





## Tips for handling a child with anxiety disorders:

1. Pay attention to your child's feelings and acknowledge it with kindness.
2. Talk with your child about his/her worries and brainstorm ways to cope.
3. Focus more on their strength rather than limitation.
4. Get ready early to save some time and avoid frustration of being late.
5. Teach them simple relaxation skills, e.g. slow deep breathing.
6. Let them confront their fears with guidance. Start slowly and increase the level of confrontation. Avoiding it altogether just makes things worse.
7. Don't give up on helping your child get through their challenges.
8. Praise and reward minor accomplishments in conquering fear.
9. Find the patience to persevere by creating a family or friend support group.
10. Do relaxing activities or exercises for self-care.

### Separation Anxiety Disorder

Separation anxiety is when children fear being parted from their parents or guardians. It's common and normal among babies and toddlers and typically goes away in early childhood. It becomes a problem when it's excessive, inappropriate for the child's developmental age and interferes with the child's life, and subsequently the parents' life.

Children with separation anxiety often find it unacceptable and fearful to sleep in foreign settings without your presence, and they complain of being sick when not with you.

### Selective Mutism (SM)

In SM, parents often report that the child readily talks at home, and/or around select family or friends, but doesn't speak in school or other social settings.

Children with SM may also be suffering from a combination of other anxiety disorders, e.g. social anxiety disorder.

### Social Anxiety Disorder (SAD)

Children with SAD often describe a fear of saying or doing the wrong thing, being laughed at, or being embarrassed. This results in avoidance of social and performance situations. Their worries focus more on what others think of them, instead of their perceptions of their performance.

### Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD)

Kids with OCD are preoccupied with whether something could be harmful, dangerous, wrong, or dirty – or with thoughts that bad stuff could happen. They have a strong urge to do certain things repeatedly in order to eliminate scary or dangerous thoughts.

Each child may experience different anxiety symptoms and the severity of each symptom may vary. Medication is sometimes prescribed but more often, therapy and counselling is tailored to address specific symptoms and concerns.

A trained psychotherapist, psychiatrist or a clinical psychologist will be able to advise you with the best option to help your child's condition. Therapy such as Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, helps to identify the origin of your child's anxiety; teaches them how to relax; look at situations in a different angle; and helps them develop better coping and problem-solving skills. **PP**

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# Your Kid, The BULLY!

*Bullying is on the rise in Malaysia and is increasingly drawing media attention. Bullying is an aggressive behaviour that is intentional, hurtful and repeated. With bullying, there is an imbalance of strength, victims are harassed, taunted, rejected and assaulted by one or more individuals. Children who bully often want to have power over others.*



Bullying can be categorised into two broad forms – direct and indirect. Direct or physical bullying involves physical contact: hitting, punching, threatening, slapping, pulling, pushing, or pinching to cause injury to the victim. Indirect bullying, although less easily spotted is no less damaging – affecting the victim in psychological and emotional ways including: verbal abuse, racial remarks, social exclusion and cyber bullying.

Why do children bully and what can we do, as parents to mentor our next generation to make better choices? If we find out that our child is bullying, the first step we must take is to acknowledge it and separate our child's identity from their actions, in order to effectively address the situation.

## **“The heart of the matter, is the matter of the heart”**

Bullying is ironically, the bully's way of crying for help. The child could be trying to communicate hurt or trauma that they've experienced – for instance, not being able to cope with challenges with family at home, teachers at school, or in social circles. Bullying may be a defence mechanism, a fight for survival when the aggressor feels that they're threatened, or encountering insecurity or peer pressure. Constant exposure to physical and verbal violence in a child's immediate environment is another risk factor.

## **“When we name it, we can to address it”**

Essentially, as we mentor our next generation, we need to help them find ways to build emotional resilience, so that they find healthy ways to respond to life's challenges. We can use short-term solutions with long-term goals to guide the process.

Short-term solutions are meant to address and manage the current situation and prevent further bullying quickly. It can be summed up to the **S.H.O.R.T** acronym below:

**S**

### **Speak to your child**

As parents we can ask our child how they are feeling and take steps to help our child identify their root issues – common examples include: resentment or un-forgiveness, fear of losing someone important, insecurity of their identity, misinterpretation of beliefs and values.

**H**

### **Help your child**

We can help them identify their emotions: is it anger, fear, sadness? Once we learn to recognize those feelings, it empowers and gives our children hope that there is a way to solve their problem. For example, if we come to a conclusion that a child has resorted to bullying because: “I am feeling sad, because, I felt rejected at school”; we as parents can work to reinforce the child’s identity and knowledge that they are loved, accepted and cared for.

**O**

### **Observe their behaviour**

Pay close attention to their behaviours, are they exhibiting traits that are unusual? We can use this to start a conversation on how they are feeling.

**R**

### **Relationship Building**

Build a relationship with our children that is based on trust and mutual respect. When we earn their trust, they will truly listen to us, because rules without a relationship lead to rebellion.

**T**

### **Time to be invested**

Relationships require vested time and genuine interest in our children’s life. Spend quality time together as a family. Building trust with your children will allow them to come to us when they encounter issues and help to establish emotional stability.



## **Long Term Goals: Building Emotional Resilience and a Positive Family Culture**

This requires investment in the development of our children to ensure that all aspects of their well-being – be it physical, cognitive, social, mental, moral, spiritual, and emotional are met, cared for and nurtured. These needs are the foundation in building resilience. When they learn compassion, empathy, character, patience it will not only benefit them in school, but also for the rest of their lives.

If we intentionally cultivate a positive culture at home that reflects love, respect, honour, integrity, children are more likely to practice it at school and in their circles of influence.

Ultimately our children look up to us to make good decisions in life. We must lay down the example so that they can examine their actions and learn from their mistakes. It’s up to us to be the positive role model that they can look up to, they can turn to for advice whenever they encounter challenges, and the ones that help them see that, bullying is never, an option. **PP**

## **About Generasi Gemilang**

YAYASAN GENERASI GEMILANG (GG) is a foundation committed to building a strong nation by raising exemplary next-generation and strengthening families. We believe that Love transforms lives; therefore our work inspires hope in people and empowers them to live life to their fullest potential. These people are children, youth, families, schools, corporations and community at large.

Governed by a Board of Trustees, GG is based in the Klang Valley and conducts services throughout Malaysia.

Formerly known as Persatuan Kebajikan Generasi Gemilang Kuala Lumpur dan Selangor, GG was incorporated as a foundation in December, 2014.

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Let's

Play!

*“A little nonsense now and then is cherished by the wisest men.”*

– Roald Dahl, Novelist



*‘Play’, simply put, is a spontaneous activity that children do to amuse and occupy their time. Play helps children develop socially, emotionally, physically as well as train and enhance their cognitive abilities.*

By **Dr Rajini Sarvananthan**,  
Consultant Developmental Paediatrician

The nature of play offers children a chance to control unpredictable events by employing certain skills such as creativity, problem solving, negotiation, cooperation, etc. There are two categories of play:

**Structured play** involves following a set of rules and seeking the most efficient way to achieve pre-existing objectives.

- Card games
- Board games
- Puzzles
- Sports – football, badminton, etc.
- Assembling toys (e.g. Lego, model airplanes, etc.)

**Unstructured play** is open-ended playtime that has no specific structure, or learning objective – your child determines or creates his/her own objective.

- Playing with blocks
- Colouring, drawing or painting whatever it is they want
- Running around at the playground/park
- Pretend play
- Inventing totally new games

Play is not as simple as it may seem and much more important to your child's development than you might have thought. Unstructured play, for example, gives your child the 3A benefits:

### Attention

Being more physically active through play helps regulate blood circulation to vital organs including the brain and thus, improve cognitive focus. Outdoor unstructured play gives your child more opportunities to encounter unique challenges and problems, which they can solve through critical and creative thinking. The world is constantly changing and through unstructured play, they are able to develop some of these adaptive skills.

### Affiliation

During play, children train their social & emotional skills by interacting with their peers. It is also a great chance to teach them social intelligence such as empathy, sympathy, cooperation, sharing and self-awareness - skills they will later need to become good adults.

### Affect

Play can potentially improve the mood and mental health of children, especially pre-schoolers. It also protects children against the effects of pressure and stress, allowing them to move at their own pace, discover their interests, and ultimately pursue their passion.

Additionally, children who adopt healthy lifestyle habits are more likely to carry forward their practices into adulthood, making them less likely to acquire chronic diseases such as heart problems or diabetes.

Don't know when or how to have unstructured play? Don't worry, start off with these, and over time you will develop your own ideas naturally:

- **Car games** (e.g., 'I Spy' and other games involving license plates, signs, and colours of cars).
- **Cook and bake together.** Things can get a little messy but it provides lots of opportunities for bonding and learning.
- **Play games while grocery shopping** (e.g. matching games, make up ingredients for creative recipes, and give children picture lists to do their own shopping)
- **Housework can be fun** too or just let them play around you.



Here are some tips on how you can incorporate unstructured play:

- Combine playtime with exercise.
- Limit the amount of screen time that all of you are exposed to.
- Let go of the leash a little. Children should be allowed to climb trees, play with dirt and splash around in a puddle once in a while. The important thing is to monitor them and interfere only if someone is about to get hurt.
- Have play dates but rotate houses with your friends to make it interesting. This also helps everyone share the load and get some much needed time off.

Find a balance between structured and unstructured play. Some people think that leaving your child to their own devices is a sign of parental neglect. That is not true at all. There are many benefits of unstructured play and parents who allow more time for it are being just as supportive, nurturing and productive as any other parent. Let your kid play and have fun – it's what they do best. **PP**

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# Family Wellness

- You & Your Spouse
- Maternal Care

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## Why Do A Mammogram?

By **Dato' Dr Siti Norlaysia binti Ismail**, Director General,  
National Population and Family Development Board (LPPKN)

*According to the 5th Malaysia Population and Family Survey, 2014 only 27.3% of married women aged 40-59 years had ever done a mammogram. Out of that, more than two-third had their screening sometime within the last 3 years. It's clear that the number of women going for mammogram is far too low and the majority of those who do, do not screen frequently enough. There is an urgent need for more women to come forward and go for annual mammogram screening.*

### What is a mammogram?

A mammogram is an x-ray of the breast. It is used to detect breast cancer early, even before lumps can be felt.

### Do I need a mammogram?

Women over 40 are encouraged to go for a mammogram, this is when the risk of acquiring breast cancer starts to increase.

### Why not do it earlier than 40?

A mammogram for younger women is not advised because their breast tissue is still dense. If there is a lump, the mammogram will not be able to differentiate between breast or cancer tissue.

In cases where you are at risk but have dense breast tissue, a digital mammogram should be considered.

The digital images created are better at finding breast cancer cells.

### Where can I go for a mammogram?

Public hospitals will conduct a mammogram for free, if you are referred to by a doctor who has reason to believe you might be at risk of breast cancer. If you want to do a mammogram without a referral, you can do so at a private hospital.

### I'm still young, am I at risk?

If you have family history of breast cancer, are overweight or obese, do not exercise regularly and have poor dietary practices, you may be more susceptible. But the fact that you are a woman already puts you at risk. Hence, all women should screen for breast cancer regardless.

## Lifestyle Tips To Prevent Breast Cancer

### Exercise regularly.

Sixty minutes of moderate-intensity exercise most days of the week is recommended to maintain a healthy weight. Physical activity fortifies the immune system and helps reduce oestrogen levels (high amounts of oestrogen in the blood may increase a woman's breast cancer risk).

### Eat a balance diet.

Diet high in fat increases the risk for breast cancer because fat facilitates the production of oestrogen. Increase your intake of dietary fibre from sources such as vegetables, whole grains and fruits. Fibre helps lower cholesterol and eliminate fat.

### Conduct breast self-examination (BSE)

Once every month starting from 18 years-old onwards. BSE is a useful and essential screening strategy, especially when used in combination with regular physical exams by a doctor and mammography.

## What happens during a mammogram?



- You'll stand & your breast will be compressed between two plates to flatten and reduce the thickness of the breast.
- This gives a better picture and allows less radiation to be used.
- For most women, this part of the procedure feels mildly uncomfortable, but it lasts for just a few seconds.
- Both breasts are screened but done one at a time.
- From start to finish, the entire procedure will take less than 30 minutes.

### Do men/husbands have a role to play in preventing breast cancer?

Yes, they do. In fact, their role is paramount because it is their duty to protect their mother, wife, sister and certainly all women from harm. Men should empower themselves with knowledge in breast cancer prevention, so that they can advocate

for breast cancer screening in their family. The support and encouragement of a husband, father, son or brother could be the nudge some women need to go for screening.

The same responsibility and concern a man has for his wife's wellbeing during pregnancy, labour and delivery should be mirrored in all aspects of her health, including breast health.

Strategy for men to encourage the women in their lives to go for screening/mammogram:

- Promote the importance of early screening, going for clinical breast exams and periodically conducting breast self-examination at home.
- Give a mammogram voucher as a gift for a birthday or anniversary.
- Bring them along to events that have free mammogram or breast screening (e.g. LPPKN or MOH events).
- Arrange for a friend or close family member of hers to do the test together.

### There's no cure for cancer, so what's the point of a mammogram?

If cancer is detected early, your chances of survival are quite high following surgery, radiation therapy or other forms of treatment. Even if you detect it at its later stages, you aren't beyond hope or help; breast cancer can be treated and controlled for a fairly long time.

However, it is important to note that late stage treatment has a more profound emotional and financial impact to the patient and his/her family. Mammograms cost between RM150-350, compare that to the cost of late stage treatment, which could stem to hundreds of thousands of ringgit in medical cost, rehabilitation, transportation and drugs.

Additionally, you might not be able to go to work, which means less income for the family. Not only will your spouse need to take care of you (and the kids), he must also provide for the family. The overwhelming stress may lead to depression, separation and overall depreciation in quality of life.

An educational collaboration with

# Malnutrition & Pregnancy

By Prof Poh Bee Koon, Nutritionist

Malnutrition is a broad term for:

- under-nutrition or over-nutrition
- insufficient intake or exceeding nutrient requirements for healthy growth and maintenance



The main causes of malnutrition:

- Inadequate intake of nutrients/ calories that fall short of pregnancy demands.
- Lack of knowledge about adequate prenatal nutrition, or dietary taboos associated with pregnancy.
- Loss or lack of appetite due to illness/morning sickness.
- Painful teeth or mouth conditions that prevent you from eating.
- Use of medications that interfere with nutrient absorption.
- Illness or other conditions that cause diarrhoea, nausea, and vomiting.

## Dangers of Malnutrition

Malnutrition poses a serious health risk to pregnant and lactating women, as it can lead to a risky pregnancy and even negatively affect the production of nourishing breast milk.

## Health risks:

Undernutrition can lead to insufficient weight gain during pregnancy, thus increasing maternal and infant mortality risk. Over-nutrition on the hand, can lead to a high-birth-weight baby. Both babies who are born low birth weight (<2.5kg), and high birth weight (>4kg) are at risk of becoming overweight or obese as adults (which also increases their risk of developing chronic diseases such as hypertension, diabetes, and heart disease). Remember, what you eat and drink is the only source of nourishment for the foetus!

Folic acid is a naturally-occurring vitamin found in foods such as spinach, sprouts, broccoli, green beans and lettuce. Without sufficient folic acid in your body, your baby may develop neural tube defects such as spina bifida (incomplete development of the spinal cord or vertebrae) or anencephaly (incomplete development of major parts of the brain). You may want to discuss getting iron and folic acid supplements which may also include other vitamins and minerals with your doctor.

# Preventing malnutrition

Eat according to the Malaysian Food Pyramid recommendations will help you to prevent malnutrition.

## Malaysian Food Pyramid



Source: Malaysian Dietary Guidelines, 2010

An excellent principle to follow for a balanced and healthy diet is that of Balance, Moderation, and Variety (BMV). Thus, your diet should be **balanced** by including foods from all five food groups in the Malaysian Food Pyramid, be comprised of **moderate** portions that are served in accordance with the recommended number of servings per food group, and consists of a wide **variety** of foods to meet all your nutritional needs.

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Nutrition Society of Malaysia

# Nutrition & Healthy Living

- Breastfeeding
- Nutri Tips and Insights
- Healthy Recipes

## Expressing Breast Milk: Safety & Hygiene

By Prof Poh Bee Koon, Nutritionist

### Location:

- ✓ Find a clean place to express in. Avoid using a toilet, bathroom, kitchen or other places where food is prepared.
- ✓ Wash hands thoroughly before starting.



### Equipment cleanliness:

- ✓ Use soap and water to clean your pump.
- ✓ Dry it with fresh paper towels.
- ✓ Remember to sterilise it every day.



### Expressing:

- ✓ Continue pumping as long as your milk flows well. Switch breasts once the flow slows down. Repeat (each breast should be pumped twice).
- ✓ Sit in a comfortable position while supporting your breast, i.e. place the palm of your hand against your ribs and directly under your breast.
- ✓ Be gentle when pumping. Use just enough pressure to maintain a seal rather than pushing the breast pump against your breast.





## Storing:

- ✔ Store the expressed milk in clean containers meant for storing breast milk.
- ✔ Disposable milk storage bags should only be used once.
- ✔ Milk bottles can be reused. Wash with soap and water then sterilise before reusing.

**Caution:** Do not overfill containers if you plan to freeze the milk. Liquids expand when frozen and overfilled containers can leak, thus leading to possible contamination of the milk.

- ✔ Always label the containers (date/time expressed and medications taken within 24 hours) before storing them in the refrigerator/freezer. If you are not at home, store it in a cooler with ice packs.
- ✔ Always use the oldest stored milk first.



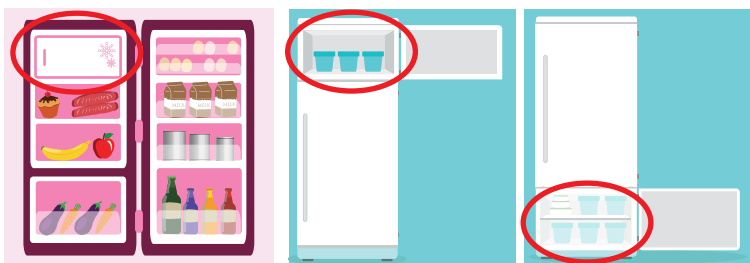
## How to store:

- ✔ Milk may be stored for 24 hours in an insulated cooler bag with ice packs.
- ✔ Milk may be refrigerated at 4°C for up to five days. It is best to store expressed milk at the back of the refrigerator, as far from the door as possible.

**Caution:** Milk kept at room temperature (25°C) should be used within six hours. It is not safe to leave milk out for long periods at higher temperatures.

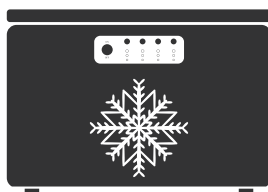


- ✔ Any frozen milk should be used:



▲ Within two weeks if kept in the freezer compartment of a single-door refrigerator

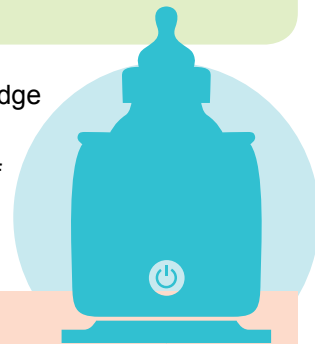
▲ Within three months if kept in the dedicated freezer compartment of a refrigerator, e.g. two (or more) door fridge



◀ Between 6 – 12 months, if kept in a deep freezer that is not frequently opened.

## How to thaw frozen breast milk:

- ✔ Defrost it in the fridge overnight.
- ✔ Place the bottle of milk in a bowl of warm water.



### Important!

- ✘ Do not thaw or heat up breast milk with a stove or microwave. This will destroy the nutrients! Microwaving can also cause uneven temperature (hot spots) in the milk that could injure baby.
- ✔ Use after thawing and dispose of any leftovers (do not re-freeze or keep in the fridge again).

**Reminder:** Always test to ensure that the milk is EVENLY warm and at a suitable temperature by squirting a few drops on your inner wrist before feeding your baby. **PP**

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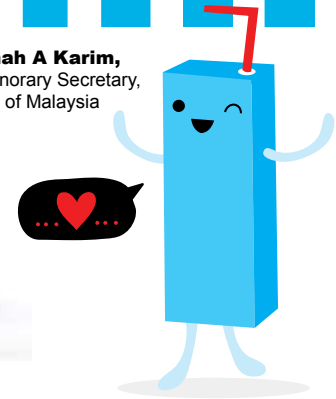
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# Getting the Full Benefits of Milk

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



*Milk and milk products are an excellent source of many essential nutrients that are critical for the proper growth and development of your child. In addition to providing him with energy, milk is a nutrient-dense food that contains essential nutrients such as calcium, protein, and vitamins A, D, and B2 (riboflavin).*



However, several studies in Malaysia have revealed that the diets of children and adolescents are lacking the intake of milk products. As children grow, they have a tendency to decrease their milk consumption. Unfortunately, this trend is also matched by an increase in their intake of less nutritious beverages (e.g. carbonated drinks, cordial, fruit drinks, etc.). This trend is worrisome in the wake of known problems such as childhood obesity and malnutrition (e.g. insufficient intake of essential nutrients or an overabundance of sugar).

On average, they consume less than two servings of milk a day, (1 serving = 1 glass), which is below the recommendation of the Malaysian Dietary Guidelines (MDG, published by the Ministry of Health). The MDG recommends a daily consumption of between two to three servings.

Thus, it is a good idea to encourage your child to consume the recommended amount of milk and milk products. By establishing a habit of drinking milk early, this would help ensure that he will continue to do so as an adult.

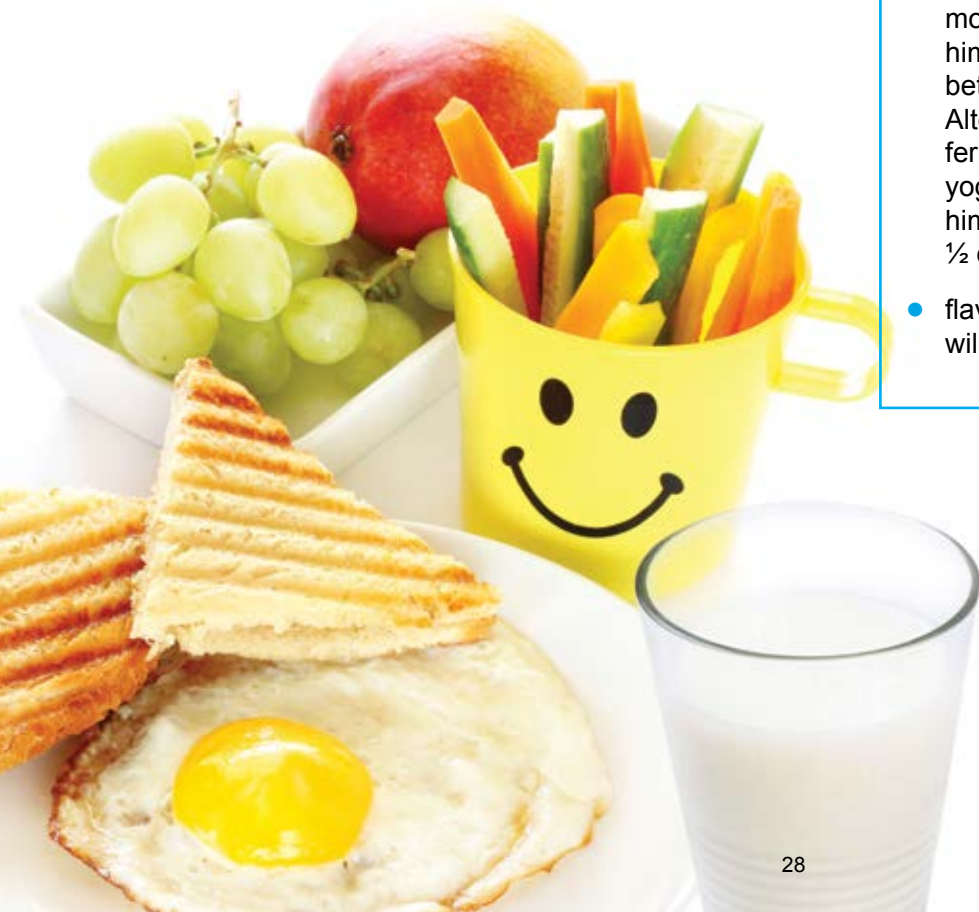
## Milk in the mornings

As the saying goes, breakfast is the most important meal of the day. This is supported by the results of the recently concluded *MyBreakfast Study of School Children: Findings, Implications & Solutions*; a study by the Nutrition Society of Malaysia (NSM) which uncovered some worrying facts:

- 1) 1 in 4 children skip breakfast at least 3 times in a week,
- 2) breakfast skippers were 1.34 times more likely to be overweight,
- 3) less than half of the children surveyed (29.9% of girls and 41.3% of boys) achieved at least 80% of their recommended nutrient intake (RNI) for calcium.

By including milk as part of his breakfast, you can ensure that your child reaps the benefits. Since milk can be packed to go, it is certainly a convenient option for breakfast. Alternatively, it can be combined with other foods in order to provide him with the energy and nutrients he needs.

This will make it easier for him to achieve his recommended nutrient intake. As an added bonus, meeting his daily nutrient requirements will also help him to unlock his full academic potential, as he will be able to pay better attention during class and concentrate better in school.



## Serving milk

There are many ways to encourage your child to drink more milk, such as:

- **serve it cold** – chill your child's milk in the refrigerator or add in a few ice cubes before serving.
- **milk shakes** – use chilled milk and blend it in a blender/food processor with some ice. Get creative and add fruits or even chocolate powder.
- **use milk when cooking** – you can add milk to your recipes, e.g. add milk to cookies, puddings, milk shake, smoothies, mushroom/chicken soups to make it creamy. You can even make a scrambled egg by adding a more milk to the egg before scrambling it. Another option for recipes that call for coconut milk (santan) is to simply replace it with milk.
- when making drinks at home, don't use sweetened condensed milk – use fresh, UHT or powdered.
- if your child is lactose intolerant, you can make milk and other milk products more tolerable for his consumption. Offer him small amounts of milk instead or better still, lactose-free dairy products. Alternatively, you can provide him with fermented milk products instead, e.g. yoghurt, cheese, yoghurt drink or serve him milk in small quantities (approximately ½ cup) at intervals throughout the day.
- flavoured milk is an acceptable option if it will get him to consume more milk. **PP**

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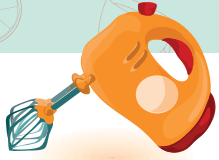
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# Baking Time, Bonding Time



Weekends are the best and easiest time to spend more quality time with your kids. Look no further than your own kitchen! No fancy equipment or expensive memberships are required, just a few simple ingredients, a mixing bowl and a spoon. Get your children to help out in the kitchen preparing these healthy teatime recipes!



## Lemon No-Bake Cheese Cake

(10 slices)

### Ingredients

- 150 g cream crackers, crushed finely
- 125 g (½ cup) butter, melted
- 200 g (¾ cup) cream cheese
- 80 ml (⅓ cup) whipping cream
- 65 g (¼ cup) icing sugar
- 10 g (1 tbsp) gelatin powder, dissolve in 2 tbsp hot water
- Juice of 1 lemon

### Method

1. Put the crushed crackers into a mixing bowl. Add butter and mix together.
2. Pour mixed crumbs into an 8" cake tin and press down with the back of a spoon until compact. Leave in the fridge to set.
3. In separate mixing bowl, combine cream cheese with the whipping cream. Whisk until mixture becomes thick and creamy.
4. Slowly stir in icing sugar and lemon juice. Mix until smooth and thick.
5. Pour mixture on top of the biscuit base from the fridge and spread evenly.
6. Leave to set in the fridge for a few hours until the topping has set.



### Suggestion

1. Cream crackers can be replaced with digestive biscuit or any other cracker.
2. Reduce the amount of lemon juice into half if you find it too sour.

#### Nutrient Content Per Slice

Calorie 230 kcal	Carbohydrate 17.3 g
Protein 3.4 g	Fat 16.3 g



# Apple Crumble

(Serves 5)

## Ingredients

### Filling:

- 210 g (4 medium-sized) green apples, peeled, pitted and cut into thin wedges
- 30 g (2 tbsp) sugar
- 125 ml (½ cup) water
- 40 g (¼ cup) raisins

### Toppings:

- 40 g (3 tbsp) brown sugar
- 3 g (½ tsp) cinnamon powder
- 35 g (4 tbsp) wheat flour
- 50 g (4 tbsp) cool butter, diced
- Chocolate for garnishing



## Method

1. Preheat oven to 180°C.
2. Cook the apples with water and sugar until tender and add raisins.
3. Arrange them in a heat proof bowl and set aside.
4. For toppings: mix brown sugar, wheat flour, butter, and cinnamon powder. Mix well to form crumbs.
5. Pour the crumbs onto the cooked apples until they are fully covered.
6. Bake in pre-heated oven for 30 minutes, or until the crumb change into slightly dark brown.
7. Garnish with cooking chocolates and serve immediately.

### Nutrient Content Per Serving:

Calorie 179 kcal	Carbohydrate 25.0 g
Protein 1.1 g	Fat 8.3 g

Recipes courtesy of 'Nutritionists' Choice Cookbook, Volume 1: Healthy Recipes for Your Little Ones' by Nutrition Society of Malaysia. To purchase this recipe book which includes over 60 recipes, please email: [president@nutriweb.org.my](mailto:president@nutriweb.org.my)

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# Child Health

- Digestive Health
- Allergy
- Paediatrics Issues
- Immunisation

## Your Child's 'Little' Helpers

By **Dr Nazrul Neezam**, Consultant Paediatrician and Paediatric Gastroenterologist & Hepatologist

*Did you know that your child's digestive system starts from his mouth and ends in his anus? This includes the entire gastrointestinal (GI) tract that comprises organs such as the stomach, intestines, liver, gall-bladder and pancreas. In order to support his healthy growth and development, a healthy digestive system is very important.*

One of the often overlooked factors of a healthy GI tract is the 'little helpers', called probiotics. They comprise of beneficial bacteria from the following families of *Lactobacillus* (e.g. *L. acidophilus*, *L. casei*), *Bifidobacterium*, etc.

Another term you may have heard is prebiotics – these are non-digestible carbohydrates that stay in the digestive tract and provide beneficial bacteria with the 'food' they need to grow. Prebiotic sources include fruits, legumes, and whole grains.

### Keeping his gut healthy

If your child eats something that does not agree with him, it is highly likely that his digestive system will produce symptoms such as abdominal pain, constipation, diarrhoea, nausea, and vomiting. In fact there are studies that show the growing prevalence of conditions such as irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) and inflammatory bowel disease among young children.

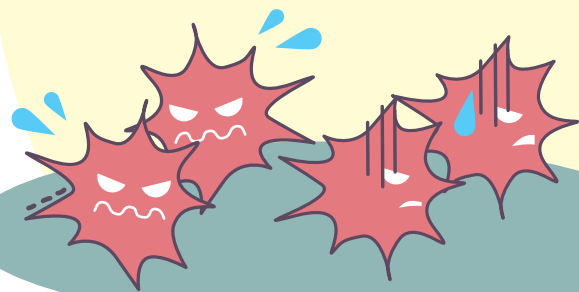
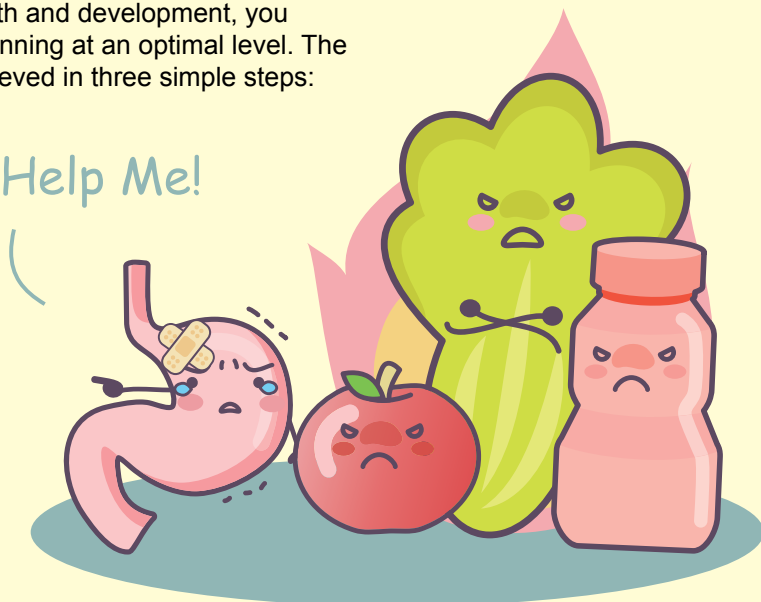


In order to minimise disruptions to his growth and development, you should strive to keep his digestive health running at an optimal level. The basics of good digestive health can be achieved in three simple steps:

### 1. Eating right

Ensure that he eats sufficient fruits and vegetables and eats regular meals. He should be eating a healthy diet that is rich in fibre daily. You should also limit his intake of deep-fried and sugary food/drinks, and lastly, encourage him to drink at least eight glasses of water daily (more on very hot days or if he engages in vigorous physical activity).

Help Me!



### 2. Staying active

Make sure he gets at least an hour of any type of physical activity. This is an excellent method for him to keep his digestive system running smoothly, i.e. it helps to promote regular bowel movements, improves his appetite, and helps him to maintain a healthy body weight.

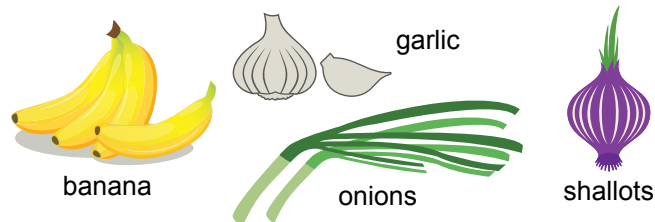
### 3. Maintaining good hygiene

Teach him all about good personal hygiene, especially simple things such as washing his hands thoroughly after using the loo and definitely before eating. Good hygiene is absolutely essential in preventing bad bacteria finding an easy way into his gut.

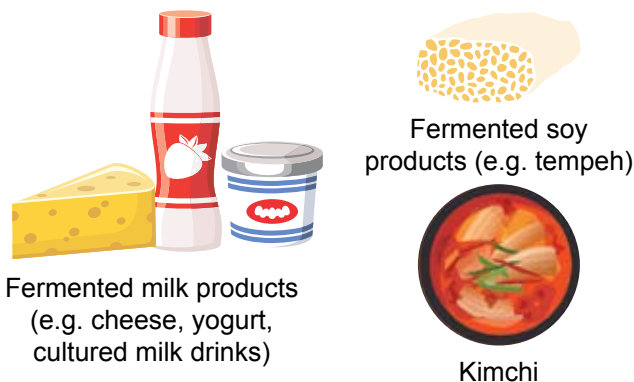
## Little helpers, big results

So what role do probiotics play? For starters, they do more than just help with digestion. One of the most important tasks they do is to keep your child's digestive system healthy. They achieve this by neutralising any pathogens (viruses or bacteria that can cause illness) before they can make him ill. Some scientists are even going as far as to call the gut a 'second brain' due to the way it interacts and influences the brain! Now, does that sound like a good reason to ensure that your child gets enough pre- and probiotics?

It is not a difficult task; in general, your child is getting enough prebiotics if he eats a lot of fruits and vegetables. Some examples of prebiotic-rich foods include:



You can ensure that your child gets enough probiotics by encouraging him to take sufficient foods or drinks that are rich in probiotics. These include:



An educational contribution by



Malaysian Paediatric Association

# Billions of Good Bacteria for a Healthy Digestive System

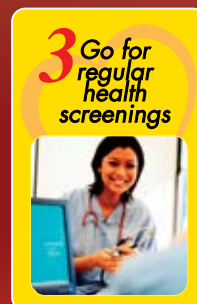
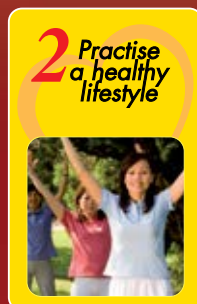
## Why is your digestive health so important?

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!



## 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
- Helps improve bowel movement
- Helps improve tolerance to milk
- Helps boost immune system
- Helps replenish good bacteria after taking antibiotics
- Helps with digestion



In support of World Digestive Health Day

- Promotes good digestive health through fun and educational activities
- Supports expert initiatives such as:



For more information, call us at our toll free number

**1 800 88 5587**

OR visit our website at [www.mmsb.com.my](http://www.mmsb.com.my) or [www.vitagen.com.my](http://www.vitagen.com.my)



- ✓ Free from cow's milk protein
- ✓ DHA, ALA, LA
- ✓ FOS, 14 vitamins & minerals



DANONE DUMEX (MALAYSIA) SDN. BHD. (35663-U) 16/070

## Specially formulated for kids with cow's milk protein allergy



Dugro Soy is a soy based formula and free from cow's milk protein. It is suitable for special feeding conditions below:

- Cow's milk protein allergy
- Lactose intolerance
- Feeding during and after diarrhoea

For the latest updates and information, you can always reach us at: Customer Careline 1800 38 1038



DumexDugro

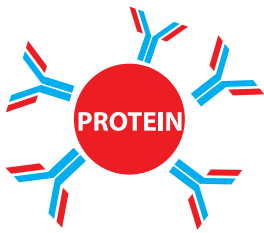
Danone Dumex (Malaysia) Sdn Bhd (35663-U) Suite 8.01, The Gardens South Tower, Mid Valley City, Lingkaran Syed Putra, 59200 Kuala Lumpur.

# Is Your Child Allergic to Cow's Milk Protein?

By **Dr Amir HA Latiff**, Consultant Paediatrician & Consultant Clinical Immunologist/Allergist (Adults & Paediatrics)

## Cow's Milk Protein

**Allergy (CMPA)** is an inappropriate immune system hypersensitivity response to one or both of the proteins found in cow's milk, **Casein & Whey.**



When cow's milk is consumed, the body is confused & recognises the protein as a threat.

The immune system attacks the protein & releases **histamines**.

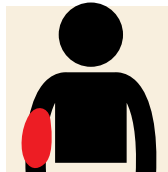
Histamines triggers allergic reactions.



rashes



itchiness



swelling

Between **2-4%** of infants develop CMPA.

CMPA is the **commonest food allergen** in young children.

Symptoms of a milk allergy may appear in babies' **days to weeks after they are first introduced** to cow milk-based formula.

Symptoms of CMPA:



Skin reactions



Nausea/vomiting



Abdominal pain



Wheezing or difficulty breathing



Anaphylaxis



Diarrhoea

Breastfed infants can, but are less likely to develop CMPA because of the protective effects of breastmilk.

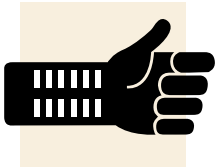


If your child seems overly fussy or shows any symptoms, consult a doctor immediately.

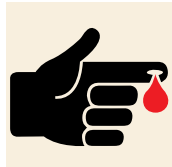


Only a medical professional can diagnose if your child has CMPA or not.

Types of tests that may be involved:



A skin prick test



A blood test



Oral food challenges

To help the doctor out, keep a food diary & record your child's behavior after each feed.

Baby Food Reaction & Allergy Log		Allergic Reactions																											
Feed	Date given	Quantity Given	Formula Brand	Reaction within 7 days	Reaction up to 30 days	Abdominal pain	Diarrhea	Constipation	Coughing	Swelling	Urticaria	Skin rash	Clot	Stomach pain	Swelling	Itching	Redness	Swelling	Eye irritation	Stuffy nose	Runny nose	Wheezing	Hypotonia	Lethargy	Infection	Black stool	Bluish lips	Other	
1																													
2																													
3																													
4																													

If your baby is diagnosed with CMPA & you are breastfeeding, the doctor may:



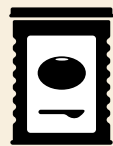
- Ask you to avoid cow's milk-based products in your diet.
- Suggest supplementing breastfeeding with a special formula and at the same time your baby does not miss out on important nutrients.
- Give advice on alternative food sources to substitute cow's milk in your diet.

If your baby is diagnosed with CMPA & your baby is being fed formula, the doctor may:



Suggest switching the type of infant formula used.

Substitutes to breastmilk or cow's milk formula for infants with CMPA:



Soy formulas (nearly 14% of infants will react adversely to soy).



Extensively hydrolysed formulas



Amino acid formulas

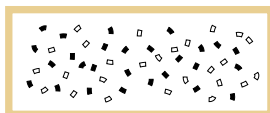
In an extensively hydrolysed formula, the protein in cow's milk is hydrolysed (broken down) to a simpler form so that the baby's body does not recognise it as a foreign object, making it less likely to trigger an allergic reaction.



Whole protein Cows milk



Extensively hydrolysed formula



Amino acid formula

**MYTH: Goat's milk is a suitable alternative.** Casein and whey from goat's milk, or any other similar groups of animal, is **similar in structure** to that found in cow's milk. Hence, the immune system will recognise them as being the same thing and still overreact.

An educational contribution by



Malaysian Paediatric Association

# Understand Eczema & Help Your Child Through It

By **Dr Leong Kin Fon**, Consultant Paediatric Dermatologist

*Atopic dermatitis, or atopic eczema, is the commonest skin disease of childhood, constitutes 40% of referrals to the Paediatric Dermatology clinic and affects 10 – 14% of children below the age of 14.*



## What is atopic eczema (AE)?

'Eczema' or dermatitis simply means skin inflammation while 'atopic' is a term used to describe the tendency to develop allergic conditions such as eczema, asthma, seasonal rhinitis and hay fever – which often have a genetic basis.

Atopic eczema is a chronic, relapsing, itchy skin condition that is very common in children, that often starts during the first 5 years of life (90 - 95%) but may occur at any age. Its severity can range from mild to severe and is characterised by six cardinal features:

- Dryness of skin due to underlying skin barrier defects.
- Itch-scratch cycle.
- Redness of skin due to inflammation. It may affect any area of the skin, but typically appears symmetrically on the face, neck, in front of the elbows and behind the knees.
- Onset at an early age (usually < 5 years old) and runs a chronic relapsing clinical course for years.
- Family or personal history of allergic diseases (atopic eczema, allergic rhinitis and asthma).
- Multiple environment irritants/ allergens that act as a trigger.

## What causes AE?

AE is due to dynamic interaction between genetic and environmental factors. Atopic eczema tends to run in families. In a family with one allergic parent, the risk of the child developing an allergic disease is about 20 to 40 per cent. The risk increases to 60-80% if both parents are affected. Family history (genetic) is believed to play an important role, especially in families with a history of AE, asthma and hay fever.

In addition, people with AE have a genetic skin defect that allows environmental irritants and allergy-inducing substances (allergens) into their skin, which triggers inflammation.

## What does AE look like?

Eczema is a term that describe changes in the outer layer of the skin, which includes redness, small blisters, oozing, crusting, scaling, thickening and altered skin colour. It has many faces that changes according to its chronicity and severity of the disease.

AE can affect any part of the skin, including the face, the bends of the elbows and knees, as well as around the wrists and neck.

Figure 1: acute eczema with redness, blisters, erosions and crusting.

Figure 2: Subacute eczema with redness, dryness and scales.

Figure 3: chronic eczema with thickened skin, altered skin colour and scaly surface.



## What can trigger AE?

Environmental triggering factors which may play a role in causing atopic eczema include the **“BIG 7”**

- 1 Changes in climate**  
– low humidity in air conditioned indoor or hot & humid outdoor.
- 2 Salty sweat**  
– prolonged contact with sweat after exercise.
- 3 Harsh detergents**  
– prolonged and frequent hot water baths with harsh cleansers.
- 4 High bacteria load on skin** especially *Staphylococcus aureus*.
- 5 Aeroallergens**  
– pollen, house dust mites, dog and cat dander etc.
- 6 Certain foods** (in younger children): eggs, soy, cow’s milk, wheat and shellfish.
- 7 Stress** – certain hormones (e.g. cortisol) produced when a person is stressed or anxious triggers a chemical response in your body, which makes skin more sensitive and reactive.

Understanding that AE is a multifactorial condition will prevent parents from spending hundreds of dollars on a long list of irrelevant allergic tests. Practically, only a few patients with AE may benefit from allergy testing. Consult your doctor for further info.

## Is AE contagious?

No, your child cannot get AE simply by touching or coming into close contact with someone who is affected.

## Is there a way I can cure my child’s AE?

Although there is no cure for AE, most children (60-70%) grow out of AE by 7-10 years old but for some (10-20%) it may prove to be a life-long struggle. These people can still live a normal life with a few minor changes to manage their condition.

## How can AE be treated?

Treatment for atopic eczema is aimed at reducing inflammation, relieving itch and preventing future flare-ups. An important component in managing atopic eczema is to break the itch–scratch–inflammation–infection cycle.

### 1. Combination approach:

- Improve skin hydration with a frequent moisturiser and gentle cleanser.
- An optimal shower package includes an ideal moisturiser and a gentle cleanser. The drier your skin, the more frequently you should moisturise. It is important that you choose a moisturiser you like, is cost effective with the features listed below:
  - Rehydrate the skin
  - Hypoallergenic and low irritation
  - Contains anti-itch, anti-inflammatory and antiseptic effects
  - Cost effective
  - Pleasant
- Anti-inflammatory measures - Steroids and Steroid sparing agents - medical devices & calcineurine inhibitors
- Anti-itch measures with wet wrap, anti-itch cream and oral anti histamine
- Antibiotic and antiseptic
- Modification of triggering factors
- Education to debunk their myths and misconceptions

**2.** Family based approach that involves both patients and caretakers.

**3.** Counselling about the disease, its triggers, treatment and long term prognosis.

**4.** Empowering the patients and caretakers to apply home therapy during acute flare-ups. **PP**

An educational contribution by



Malaysian Paediatric Association



# Preventing Pneumococcal Infections

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



*Pneumococcal infections are caused by streptococcus pneumoniae commonly referred to as pneumococcus.*

*Globally, more than 2 million people die of pneumococcal infections every year of which a million are children below 5 years.*

## High-risk groups

### Common cause of:

- Pneumonia
- Meningitis
- Bacteremia
- Otitis media
- Sinusitis
- Joint & bone inflammation
- Cardiac infections
- Conjunctivitis



children who attend daycare



adults older than 50 years



smokers

immuno-compromised persons (e.g. HIV, cancer)



children younger than 5 years, particularly aged 2 years or younger

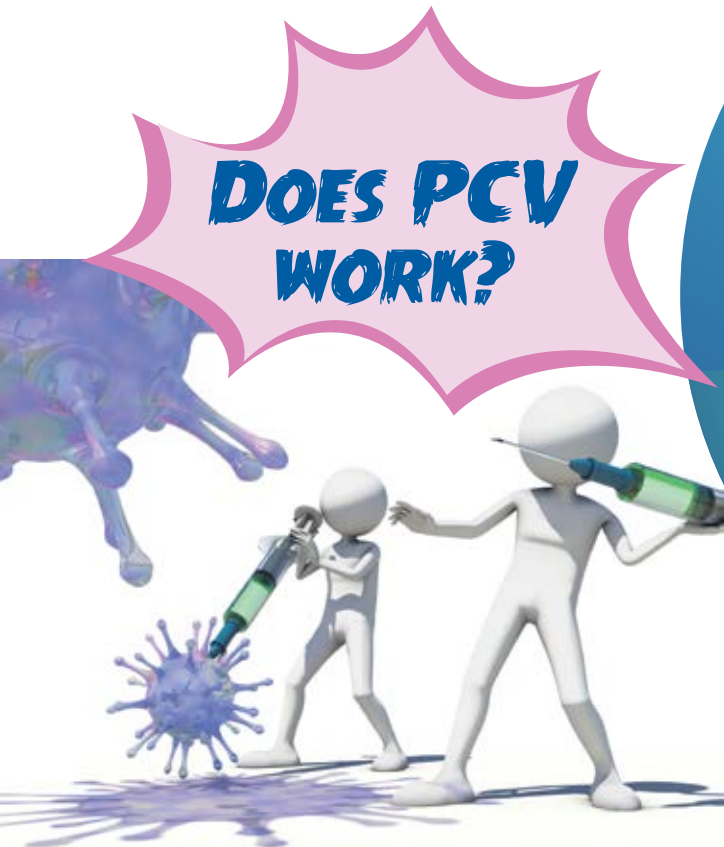
## Prevention through immunization:

**PCV13** – Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine

**PPSV23** – Pneumococcal Polysaccharide Vaccine

The number refers to the amount of different serotypes the vaccine can protect against: 13 serotypes in PCV13 and 23 serotypes in PPSV23.

**DOES PCV  
WORK?**



- PCV is 77% to 94% efficacious against vaccine serotypes, in many populations of healthy children.
- PCV caused significant decrease in pneumococcal pneumonia admissions for children 2-4 years (73%) and adults 18-39 years (30%).
- PCV decreases antibiotic-resistant Invasive Pneumococcal Disease (IPD).
- PCV is the only vaccine in the last 20 years to show a significant reduction in all-cause child mortality. 7 deaths were prevented for every 1000 children vaccinated with PCV in The Gambia study.
- PCV resulted in less IPD in all age groups in US due to herd immunity.
- The potential impact of PCV is greater in countries with high child mortality, where pneumococcal disease incidence is highest. The WHO SAGE report concludes that introduction of PCV is a “high priority” in these countries.
- PCV is cost effective in most countries.
- PCV is well-tolerated with no serious adverse effects.

## Doses

### Children:

- 4 doses of PCV-13 at 2,4,6 & 12-15 months
- 3 doses if  $\geq 6$  months
- 2 doses if  $\geq 1$  year
- 1 dose if  $\geq 2$  years

**Other children & adults:**  
1 dose of PCV-13

**Adult  $\geq 65$  years:**  
1 dose of PCV followed  
by PCV-24 a year later



PCV is highly recommended for the protection against pneumococcal diseases in children and in adults above 50 years. It is not covered under our National Immunisation Programme but is readily available in private clinics and hospitals. Consult your doctor about getting vaccinated and learn more about protecting you and your family against the threat of pneumococcal diseases. **PP**

An educational contribution by



Malaysian Paediatric Association

# JOIN THE FIGHT AGAINST PNEUMOCOCCAL DISEASE

WITH

## SUPER CAPE KID

**PNEUMOCOCCAL INFECTIONS  
RESULT IN THE ESTIMATED DEATH  
OF 476,000 CHILDREN ANNUALLY  
WORLDWIDE.<sup>1</sup>**

**POW!**

**VACCINATION IS THE BEST WAY  
TO PREVENT AGAINST  
PNEUMOCOCCAL DISEASE.<sup>2</sup>  
ASK YOUR DOCTOR TODAY.**

Pneumococcal disease is caused by bacteria known as *Streptococcus pneumoniae*.<sup>1</sup>

It can result in:  
Infection of the lung<sup>1</sup> (Pneumonia)  
Infection in the bloodstream<sup>1</sup> (Bacteremia)  
Infection of lining of the brain and spinal cord<sup>1</sup> (Meningitis)  
Infection of the middle ear<sup>1</sup> (Otitis Media)

In your children, watch out for fever, chills, cough and breathing difficulty.<sup>2</sup>

**Pfizer**

References:  
1. World Health Organisation (WHO). Pneumococcal vaccines WHO position paper – 2012. *Wkly Epidemiol Rec* 2012;37(14):129–144.  
2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Pneumococcal Disease and the Vaccine (Shot) to Prevent It. CDC website. Available at: <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pneumococcal/disease/child/pneumo.html>. Accessed on 11 May 2014.

# YOU CAN'T SEE ME BUT I CAN SEE YOU-HOO!

I like to play hide-and-seek, just like your kids. I'm behind the curtain, underneath your bed, inside your cupboard; just waiting for the right moment to infect you and your family. I can be anywhere and everywhere. It would be so easy to surprise you with some pain, fever, rashes and gum or nose bleed, like I did to more than 120,000 people last year<sup>1</sup>.

So let's share the fun! I'll go hide, but I bet I can find you before you find me!

**#MEETMRDENGUE**

MEET **MR DENGUE**  
★ THE UNWANTED GUEST ★

A community message brought to you by

**SANOFI PASTEUR**

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Selangor Darul Ehsan, Malaysia Tel: +603 7651 0800 Fax: +603 7651 0801/0802

Reference:

1. Dengue deaths spike 56.3% in 2015 from year before. Available at <http://www.freemalaysiatoday.com/category/nation/2016/01/06/dengue-deaths-spike-56-3-in-2015-from-year-before/>.

★ FIND MY BEST WORK AT [WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/MYMRDENGUE](http://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/MYMRDENGUE) ★

# Bite Size Terror

By **Datuk Dr Zulkifli Ismail**, Consultant Paediatrician & Paediatric Cardiologist

*In 2015, there was an increase of 11.2% in the number of reported dengue cases from the previous year. Because most children and young adults spend more time outdoors, they are more likely to be infected. Here's how you can protect your family:*

## KNOW YOUR ENEMY

**Main vector**



Aedes aegypti

**Lifespan**



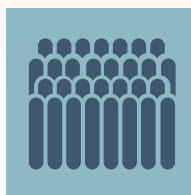
2 weeks – 1 month

**Distance covered**



400-500 meters

**Eggs produced**



~ 1000 per lifetime

**Prime breeding ground**



urban, highly populated areas

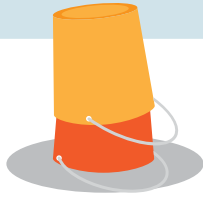
**Breeding conditions**



standing water

## DESTROY AEADES BREEDING GROUNDS

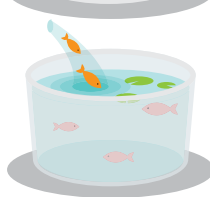
Empty, cover or invert open pots, basins or containers which may retain water after rain.



Add insecticides to standing water to kill mosquito larvae.



Keep larvae-eating fish in outside ponds.



Unclog gutters & drainage.

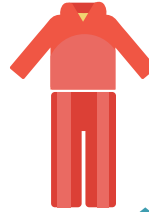
Keep area of house and neighbourhood clean.

## OTHER PREVENTIVE STEPS



Use mosquito coils, repellent or spray.

Avoid outdoor activities when mosquitoes are most active (i.e. 5.30-8.30 am and 5.30-8.00 pm).



Wear long sleeved shirts and pants when going outside.



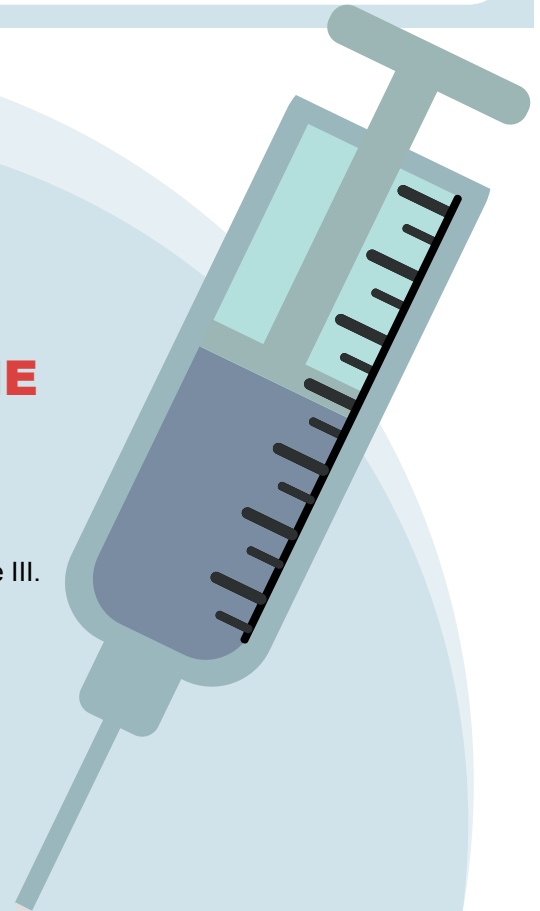
Install mosquito mesh/ screen on windows.

## UPDATE ON DENGUE VACCINE

- Dengvaxia® (CYD-TDV) is the only licensed dengue vaccine.
- Dengvaxia® has been approved for marketing in Mexico, El Salvador, Brazil, Singapore, the Philippines and Costa Rica.
- A South American based vaccine, TV003, is currently in phase III.
- Phase II trial for a dengue vaccine candidate, DENVax, is underway.
- Three additional dengue vaccine candidates are in clinical development.

### Vaccine Efficacy in Clinical Trials

- Manufacturers of Dengvaxia® claim it prevents 8 out of 10 hospitalizations and 9 out of 10 severe cases and is 60.8% efficacious against all four dengue serotypes.
- In one small study, TV003 showed it could protect all 21 participating volunteers from the Dengue-2 virus.
- WHO recommends that countries should consider introduction of the dengue vaccine CYD-TDV only in geographic settings (national or subnational) where epidemiological data indicate a high burden of disease. **PP**



An educational contribution by



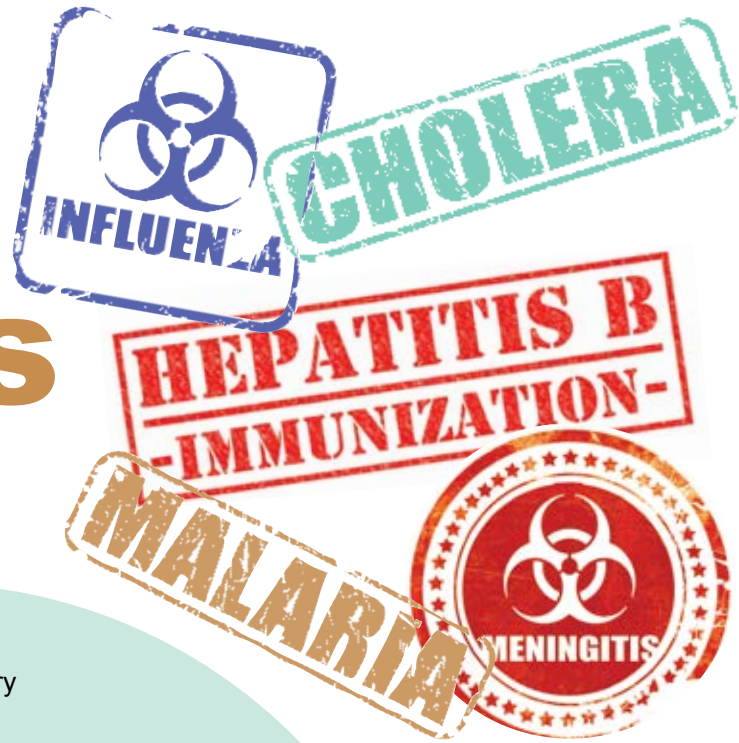
Malaysian Paediatric Association

# Travel Vaccines for Your Child

By **Datuk Dr Zulkifli Ismail**, Consultant Paediatrician & Paediatric Cardiologist

## Did you know?

Malaysia's Ministry of Health provides the *rakyat* with mandatory vaccines to prevent certain major childhood diseases for free.



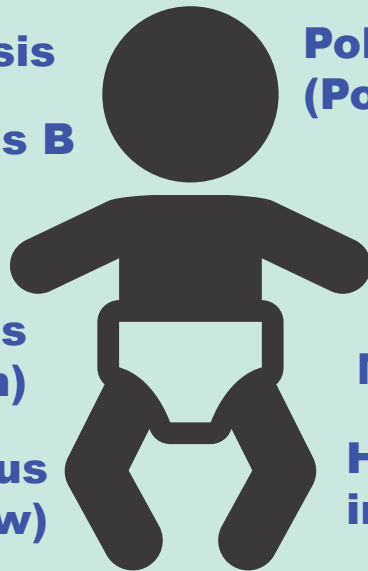
**Tuberculosis**

**Hepatitis B**

**Diphtheria**

**Pertussis  
(Whooping cough)**

**Tetanus  
(Lockjaw)**



**Poliomyelitis  
(Polio)**

**Rubella  
(German measles)**

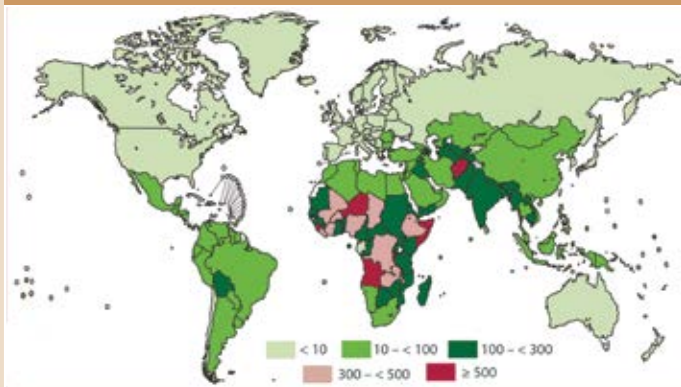
**Measles**

**Mumps**

**Haemophilus  
influenzae type B (Hib)**

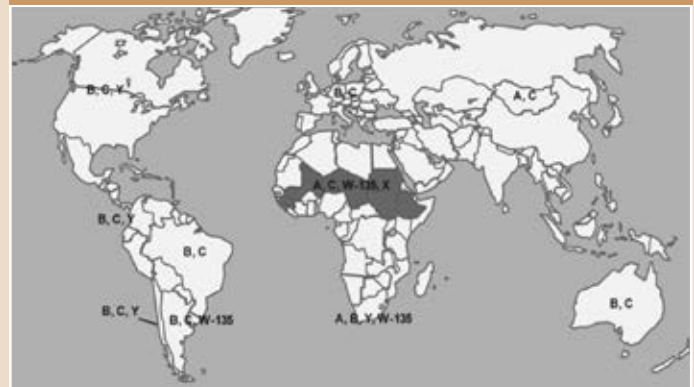
However, there are also other diseases from which your child can get protection through various optional vaccines, especially when travelling to countries where these diseases are endemic to. These include:

### Invasive Pneumococcal Disease



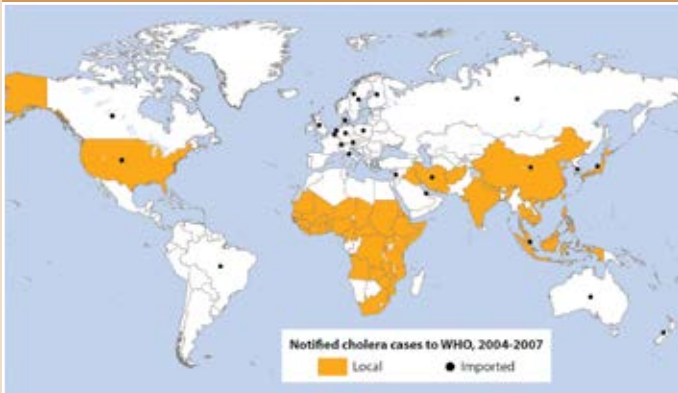
Pneumococcal mortality rate

### Meningococcal A, C, Y, W-135 (Meningitis)



Countries or areas at risk

### Cholera



Notified cholera cases to WHO, 2004-2007

### Typhoid (Typhoid fever)



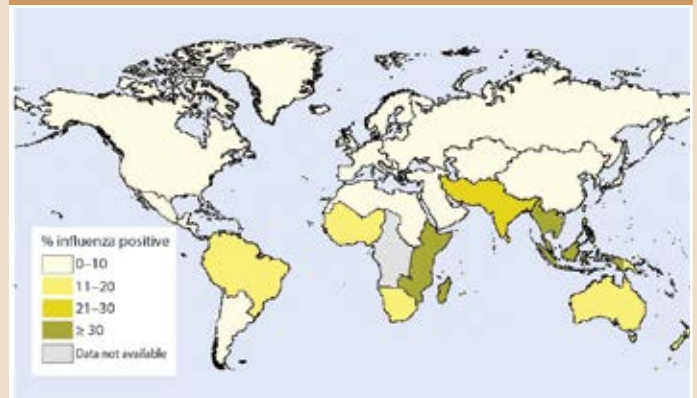
Countries or areas at risk

### Hepatitis A



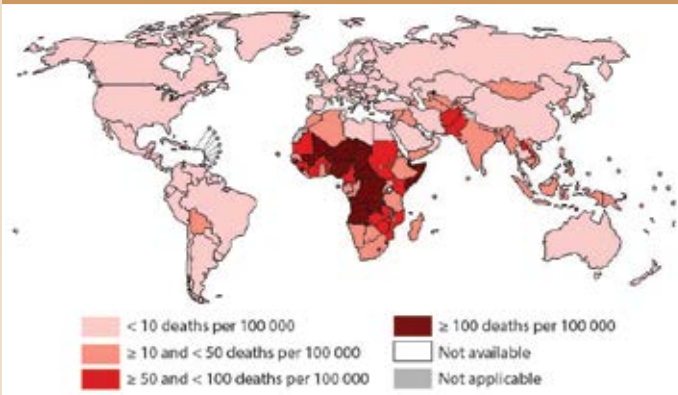
Countries or areas with moderate to high risk

### Influenza



Countries or areas at risk, 2016

### Rotavirus (Gastroenteritis due to rotavirus)



Mortality rate in children younger than 5 years, 2013

### Japanese Encephalitis



Countries or areas at risk, 2012

When travelling, consider the area you are going to. There are other vaccine-preventable diseases such as:

- Varicella (Chicken pox)
- Flu, inclusive of bird flu (Influenza)
- Typhoid Fever
- Yellow Fever
- Rabies

**VACCINATION**  
**SAVE LIVES**

An educational contribution by



Malaysian Paediatric Association





# UPGRADE YOUR FLU DEFENCE

## INFLUENZA: KNOW THE THREAT

- Flu is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses that infect the nose, throat, and lungs.<sup>1</sup>
- It can cause mild to severe illness, and at times can lead to death.<sup>1</sup>
- The best way to prevent the flu is by getting a flu vaccine each year.<sup>1</sup>

## WHO SHOULD BE VACCINATED?



Everyone who is **6 months and older** should get the flu vaccine every year.<sup>1</sup>

It is especially important for these **high risk groups** to be vaccinated:<sup>1</sup>

- Children below 5 years
- Adults 65 years and above
- Pregnant women
- People with medical conditions such as asthma, diabetes, heart disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)
- People who live with or care for people in high risk groups

**ASK YOUR DOCTOR ABOUT THE 4 COMMON INFLUENZA STRAINS**



[www.vaccinationisprotection.com](http://www.vaccinationisprotection.com)

A community message brought to you by

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# My Positive Teen

- Socio-emotional
- Conditions and Diseases



*An average of 18,000 teenagers in Malaysia get pregnant each year, 25% or about 4,500 cases involved out-of-wedlock pregnancy. The Fifth Malaysian Population and Family Survey conducted by LPPKN revealed that 4.8% of all teens have had sex at least once. The survey also found that Malaysian teens had inadequate understanding of matters related to sexuality/ reproductive health and limited knowledge when it came to sexual relationships.*

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

## Preventing Teenage Pregnancies

Afraid, alone and ill-informed, teens who get pregnant out of wedlock often opt for the easiest way out like dumping the baby or subjecting themselves to unsafe abortion. Social rejection from families and the community also rob the girls from the support and assistance they desperately need.

### Baby Dumping Cases in Malaysia, 2013-2015

Year	Baby Dumping Cases	Found Alive	Found Dead
2015	104	43	61
2014	102	28	74
2013	90	32	58

Source: <http://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2016/01/17/more-than-half-of-104-dumped-babies-found-dead-in-2015/>

The realities of having a baby before finishing school hits hard. The financial and psychological burden of raising a child can overwhelm teenage mothers, as compared to older women who are financially stable and more physically and mentally mature.

But regardless of whether a baby was conceived out of wedlock or not, teen pregnancies, in general, involve a heightened health risk for both mother and child:

**The Mother:** Anaemia, malaria, HIV and other sexually transmitted infections, postpartum haemorrhage, obstetric fistula and mental disorders, such as depression.

**The Child:** Stillbirths, preterm birth, low birth weight and death in the first week of life are higher among babies born to adolescent mothers.

Helping our children involves equipping them and yourself, with the right know-how.

## 1. Talk about reproductive health

Parents should lay a basic understanding of reproductive health and teach their children the values and responsibilities concerning sexuality, sexual responsibility, and risky sexual conduct that could lead to pregnancy. Inform them about the dangers of sexually transmitted diseases (HIV/AIDS), unprotected sex, baby dumping, rape, abortion, etc.

## 2. Abstinence training

Teach them how to say 'NO' and recognise risky behaviour and situations that could lead to premarital sex. For example, how to confidently and assertively confront pressure lines like if a person says "I love you", "if you love me you'll..." or "we were meant to be together, forever". Awareness and common knowledge and skills may prevent your children from making hasty decisions they will regret.

## 3. Keep tabs

Always keep an eye on your child and mould them with good values and model the morals you want them to espouse. Rules & boundaries are also important; all families have them. Be sure they understand your rules regarding reproductive health and relationships with the other sex.

## 4. Keep lines of communication open

Be approachable and reassure them that if they have any questions or doubts about reproduction, or anything else for that matter, you are there for them.

Tip: It can be hard to talk about this subject, so start

early and ease into it as your children grow older. Do so in bouts, keep it simple and easy to understand.

Tip: Practice by role playing a few possible scenarios they might encounter in life.

## 5. Spend quality time with the family

Many parents today spend so little time with their teens, it's no wonder these adolescents feel disconnected. These activities may seem small but are impactful in strengthening parent-child bonds, establishing trust, invite interaction and provides opportunity for parents to inculcate good moral values.

Things to do together as a family:

- Have dinner or other main meals.
- Watch movies, go for special outings or take a vacation.
- Attend family gatherings.
- Attend religious functions together whenever possible.

Finally, keep yourself informed, none of these will work if you have no knowledge of it to start with. With proper guidance, support and skills, your children will make realistic, positive and healthy choices throughout their lives. **PP**

### I'M IN CONTROL

The *Modul Cakna Diri* (I'm In Control Module) is used as the social and reproductive health curricular in government schools for post UPSR and post PT3 students. It is also taught at LPPKN's kafe@TEEN youth centres and also includes a module for parents.

The centre provides counselling services and advice on reproductive health, as well as health and social education, to adolescents and youths to enable them to make responsible choices on matters related to their sexuality.

Besides that, teens can enjoy numerous educational & skills-building programmes as well as fun activities and have the chance to make new friends. Enrol your teenager for free at any kafe@TEEN centre located near you and mould your teens into healthy, resilient and responsible people able to cope well with the challenges in life.

Website : <http://www.lppkn.gov.my/>  
Call : 03-26937555

An educational collaboration with





# 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.

#### • Facebook:



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

#### • Talks and Seminars:

Have questions? Ask the Experts? Join us in our Positive Parenting seminars featuring some of the nation's top Parenting Experts!



#### • Website:



[www.mypositiveparenting.org](http://www.mypositiveparenting.org): One-stop digital portal with hundreds of articles, recipes and easy access to paediatricians.

#### • 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.

### ~ Our Collaborating Expert Partners ~



Positive Parenting is a non-profit community education initiative. Companies wishing to support us or wish to collaborate with the programme are welcome to contact the Programme Secretariat.

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