Volume 2 • 2020 **Complimentary Copy**

ositive renting renting Malavsia The Official Guide Series On Maternal, Child & Family Care By The Malaysian Paediatric Association

PERS

TRIK

oni gniineros Digiial Era

Malaysia

Living with a **Child with Asthma**

Are We **Over-scheduling Our Kids?**

DFF **Positive Parenting Guide!**

SMS: YES PPG <space ailing address <sp 010-9379 326



www.mypositiveparenting.org f positiveparentingmalaysia **o** mypositiveparenting





Datuk Dr Zulkifli Ismail

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



Malaysian Paediatric Association Parental awareness and education is vital in raising healthy children. 99



Dato' Dr Musa Mohd Nordin norary Treasurer, MPA and Consultant Paediatrician & Neonatologist



Dr Mary Joseph Marret Consultant Paediatrician



Dr Rajini Sarvananthan Consultant Developmental Paediatrician







ww.nutriweb.org.my 66 Healthy eating habits and active living habits must be inculcated from young. 99



Dr Tee E Siong Nutritionist and President, NSM



Dr Roseline Yap Nutritionist and Hon. Treasurer, NSM



trical and Gynaeco Society of Malaysia ww.oasm.ora.my

A healthy pregnancy gives your baby a good start in life. 99



Dr H Krishna Kumar Consultant Obstetrician & Gynaeco and Past President, OGSM cologist



Malaysian Psychiatric Association vw.psychiatry-malaysia.org

Mental health is a key component in every child's total health and well-being. 99



Dr Yen Teck Hoe Consultant Psychiatrist



Malaysian Society of Clinical Psychology http://malaysiaclinicalpsychology.com/ 66 If a child cannot learn in the way we teach, we must teach in a way the child can learn.99



Professor Dr Alvin Ng Lai Oon Clinical Psychologist & Founding President, MSCF

🔆 LPPKN National Population and Family Development Board Malavsia

www.lppkn.gov.my Strong families are central to raising children with values and principles.99



En Hairil Fadzly Md. Akir Deputy Director-General (Policy), LPPKN

MMHA Malaysian Mental Health Association http://mmha.org.my/ Mental health and

resilience starts with the family. 99



Dato' Dr Andrew Mohanraj Consultant Psychiatrist & President, MMHA



Malaysian Association of Kindergartens A quality preschool education prepares children for formal schooling and lifelong learning.99



Ms Eveleen Ling Chairman, PTM



Malaysian Association of Paediatric Dentistry http://mapd.my A child's optimal oral health is a start to good quality of life.99



Dr Ahmad Faisal Ismail Hon. General Secretary



http://ppbm.org/ ••Early childhood care and development helps children grow and discover their potential.99



Pn Anisa Ahmad President, PPBM



Malaysian Paediatric Association

Executive Committee 2019/2021

President Dr Hung Liang Choo

Immediate Past President Assoc Prof Dr Muhammad Yazid Jalaludin

Vice President Dr Selva Kumar Sivapunniam

Hon Secretary Assoc Prof Dr Tang Swee Fong

Asst Hon Secretary Dr Mohamad Ikram Ilias

Hon Treasurer Dato' Dr Musa Mohd Nordin

Committee members Datuk Dr Zulkifli Ismail Dr Noor Khatijah Nurani Dr Ong Eng-Joe Dr Thiyagar Nadarajaw Dr Fauziah Zainal Abidin Dr Rakhee Yadav Hematram Yadav

Positive Parenting

DATUK DR ZULKIFLI ISMAIL Chairman, Positive Parenting Management Committee Secretary-General, Asia Pacific Pediatric Association (APPA)



Stay Strong, Malaysia!

Humanity has just gone through a very sobering experience due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Hundreds of thousands have lost their lives and much more have been infected. Worldwide lockdowns and restriction of movements were imposed to contain the spread, causing disruptions in various aspects of our life: socially, mentally, physically and financially. And now, as we continue to pick up the pieces of our life and move forward, it is important for us to support and be kind to one another during this difficult time.

One pressing concern that surfaced during the turmoil is the spread of misinformation on the internet. In this issue's *Feature*, we discussed how to distinguish between trustworthy and false news, and how you can benefit digital technology more effectively to become better parents.

Our experts also explore other topics including a discussion on the different types of eczema, tips for a healthy holiday and if your kids' daily schedule is overpacked.

Despite the recent hurdle, Positive Parenting continues to provide useful information to support your parenting journey. All our previous articles and issues can be accessed from our website. You can also browse our Facebook and Instagram pages for quick tips, articles, infographics and updates.

The articles contained in this magazine are not in any way intended as substitutes for medical attention. When in doubt, consult your doctor. Malaysian Paediatric Association, the experts and their respective organisations do not endorse any brands and are not responsible or liable for any advertisement or advertorial by sponsors. Positive Parenting guide is published by VersaComm Sdn Bhd, Secretariat of the Positive Parenting programme initiated by the Malaysian Paediatric Association. No part of this publication may be reproduced without the written consent of the Positive Parenting Secretariat.

contents

4 Parenting in a Digital Era: Resources for Parents

Family Wellness 10 Parents VS Teachers

Child Health

15 The Eczema Menu 17 Living with a Child with Asthma 20 Pneumonia Alert! 23 Boosting Your Child's Immune System against Infectious Diseases 27 Guide to a Healthy Holiday

Nutrition & Healthy Living

29 Milk Formulated for Kids

Child Development

32 Are We Over-scheduling Our Kids?

My Positive Teen 34 Self-Harm in Teens





Parenting in a Digital Era: **Resources for Parents**

We live in a digital age, and it is almost impossible to avoid using the Internet or the various technologies that exist around us. Technological progress has become integral in our daily lives, not only at work, but also in our personal lives, in communities and in our roles as parents.

With Prof Dr Alvin Ng Lai Oon,

Clinical Psychologist & Founding President of Malaysian Society of Clinical Psychology; **Pn Anisa Ahmad**, Early Childhood Educator & President of Association of Registered Childcare Providers Malaysia; **Datuk Dr Zulkifii Ismail**, Chairman of Positive Parenting Programme



It is no longer uncommon to find people everywhere, of all ages, using their mobile devices in restaurants, on trains, in the parks, even at hospitals and on airplanes. It is the new normal.

An American research centre reported that more than 5 billion people worldwide are mobile device users and half of them use smartphones. A 2018 survey by the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission also found that Malaysia has reached a 78% smartphone penetration rate.

With the rapid spread of digital technology, various aspects of parenting have become implicated as well. New terms have begun to appear to describe how technology has left its mark on modern parenting – sharenting, digital babysitters, screen time and parennials to name a few.

Many have addressed the issue of parental control over kids' Internet and gadget usage. But, what about the parents themselves? How can we use digital technology as a resource to become better parents?

In praise of the Internet

Digital technology has afforded us huge conveniences in our lives. Take the impact of the Internet and smartphones. We can **access everything we need** with a tap of our fingers, anytime and anywhere. We order food, pay bills, watch movies, call for taxis and more, all from the comfort of our homes.

Early childhood educator **Pn Anisa Ahmad** feels that technological advancements are definitely an advantage to parents, especially in this modern age when life moves fast and quick answers are required.

"One can just type your questions and get instant answers from the Internet. Easy access to information is useful for modern parents as they no longer have to depend on the help and guidance of their extended family, or even 'the whole village', as the generation before them did," said the president of Association of Registered Childcare Providers Malaysia.

Numerous websites and blogs provide reviews of products or facilities for children, making it easier for parents to compare and choose what is best for their kids. Online forums, Facebook and Whatsapp groups also enable parents to share their experiences, provide support for each other and exchange tips and recommendations on a more personal level.

When it comes to connectivity, technology has been advantageous. "My family's WhatsApp group is essential as we are able to be updated on everyone's whereabouts, or if there's any urgent matter to deal with, say an emergency. It's easier to keep in touch with everybody all at the same time," said the mother of five.



The dark side

The widespread use of digital technology also, however, has raised new challenges and legitimate concerns. Prof Dr Alvin Na Lai Oon remarked, "The Internet facilitates dissemination of knowledge and information, but this also means it is easier for misinformation to spread."

People may confuse fake news with real news, believe pseudoscientific claims and follow harmful trends they read online. Unverified messages are also rampant on social media. Plus, the ceaseless flow of information makes it harder to filter out the bad from the good.

"There are many factors that contribute to this problem. For example, it's impossible to regulate every corner of the Internet due to its enormity. The lack of authority on the Internet enables everyone, no matter who or how credible he or she is, to propagate their message to the world. This is good for freedom of speech, but not so much in safeguarding the veracity of knowledge," explained the clinical psychologist.

The Internet also exposes the family unit to new threats, such as scam and fraud emails, cyberbullying, online predators, internet addiction and other unforeseen harms.

Pn Anisa related her experience: "My youngest daughter was playing with my phone and chatting with what we thought was a chatbot. The conversation was friendly and innocent, but after it found out my daughter is only a child, it started asking weird questions. Luckily I was with her at the time and promptly told her to stop the conversation."

The two sides of internet

Good	Bad
Quick and easy access to information	Prevalence of misinformation

- Compare and choose products
- Share tips and experiences
- Keep in touch with family
- Information overload
- Exposure to online threats
- Internet addiction

Using the Internet wisely



More parents, especially millennials, are turning to Dr Google and the "virtual village" for advice, support and parenting tips. They

are able to gain wider knowledge about their child's health and development, but the large amount of information can be overwhelming and lead to conflicting advice. Unreliable resources are also pervasive in the virtual world.

So, how can we use the Internet more wisely and ethically as parents and individuals? "The obvious recommendation is to refer to trustworthy and reliable

sources," advised Prof Ng. "Seek the answer to your health-related questions from websites of governmental, medical and expert organisations, children's hospitals, and academic institutions. These sites usually provide credible information. If they don't have the information you need, then only seek out sites that have evidencebased resources, rather than public testimonials or a long list of doubtful honours or credentials."

For other types of sources online news, magazines, blogs, forums, social media – it is

Nevertheless, Consultant Paediatrician Datuk Dr Zulkifli Ismail advised: "Parents should keep in mind that no website can replace seeing a real healthcare professional, especially when it involves your child's health. If your child seems ill, don't post her symptoms on social media to ask for your friends' or family's opinions. They may be wellmeaning, but they are not healthcare experts themselves. Seek immediate medical care. It's also good to verify any information you learn online with your doctor."

The chairman of the Positive Parenting Programme also reminded parents to be wary of sharenting. "Sharenting is when parents overshare the details of their child's life on social media or blogs. If you want to share funny videos or cute photos of your toddler with other family members, use private channels, like emails or personal online storage."



He also shared other insights on seeking information online.

- **Question your assumptions.** Confirmation bias leads us to seek information that approves what we already believe in. Looking for opposing information helps to balance our view and judge more fairly.
- Refer to scientific consensus. If you learn something that sounds too controversial or very different from the established science, it is probably not accurate. One study is not enough as evidence.
- Natural is not always better. There is a prevalent notion in the wellness industry that "nature is better". But nature also contains harmful substances and is not always a safer choice.
- Fancy does not mean effective. Websites with fancy-sounding "too-good-to-be-true" methods and a string of testimonials and acknowledgements are likely to be targeting desperate parents who are seeking help for their children's health issues.

good to be sceptical and verify information before heeding the advice and sharing it with others. Here are some tips as shared by Prof Ng:

 Cross-checking. Find out if similar information is shared by other legitimate sources. If yes, the information is good. Otherwise, it is probably false.

Check for credentials.

The author should have a background in related fields and qualifications from legitimate institutions. If it's a news or magazine article, make sure there is input from experts, whose backgrounds and credentials are easily obtainable, transparent and legitimate.

Confirm details and

references. If possible, confirm any statistics, published studies, people's names, organisations and other details mentioned in the writing by searching for the first source.

• Look at the URL. Some websites use addresses similar to reputable media to trick readers into trusting their content. Confirm the real web address by looking at the top results from a search engine.

Verify with a fact

checker. The information you received sounds suspicious? Check it with fact checkers, such as *Snopes*, Google's *Fact Check Explorer* or our local *Sebenarnya.my*; or simply key in the word "fraud" or "fake" next to the information you are searching for.

Conduct reverse image search. If any image is used, it can be verified by doing a reverse search via TinEye or Google Images.

Feature

Meanwhile, Pn Anisa advised parents to stay updated with the latest news and tech. "This is important to avoid getting tricked, to learn about better channels of learning, to be aware of new threats and to be able to guide your kids. Find out about good and suitable apps that can be a learning tool for your kids, like Didi & Friends, Scholastic, PBS Kids, etc. YouTube is a good resource, but it takes only a few clicks to move from a safe place to disturbing content - so monitor your kids at all times."

She added, "Remember that you are the role model for your kids. Show good Internet and gadget usage and practise what you preach. Be with them when they're learning to use these devices and answer any questions that may arise. Watch shows and play video games together, and engage with



your children online. Note any unusual behaviour or postings online. Be a part of their online environment, but know your limit and avoid being too intrusive."

Pn Anisa also reminded parents that no screen time should be allowed for children below two years old and the limit for children aged two to six is two hours, because at these ages, social interaction and play is important for their emotional and physical development. **PP**

List of credible sources

There are plenty of trustworthy online resources for parents and the general public. Here are some examples:

Authorities

- Ministry of Health (MOH) (moh.gov.my)
- Lembaga Penduduk & Pembangunan Keluarga Negara (LPPKN) (lppkn.gov.my)
- World Health Organization (WHO) (who.int)
- United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) (unicef.org)

Associations

- Positive Parenting Malaysia (mypositiveparenting.org)
- Nutrition Month Malaysia (nutritionmonthmalaysia.org.my)
- Immunise4Life (immunise4life.my)
- Healthy Children by American Association of Paediatrics (healthychildren.org)

Portals

- MyHealth, MOH (myhealth.gov.my)
- Bahagian Pemakanan, MOH (nutrition.moh.gov.my; facebook.com/nutritionistkkm)
- WebMD (webmd.com)
- Psychology Today (psychologytoday.com)





The best part of **GoMiniTH** is how sleek and elegant it looks. I feel comfortable using it in the office and bringing it around with me.

Mum of Juntin









0:0

Introducing **GoMini**[™], Pigeon's most portable and lightweight breast pump. Easy to hold and easy to pack, even into a small bag.

Mums go with GoMini™.

Family Wellness

其他

As parents, we all want our children to succeed academically. There are many factors that can influence this and the biggest has to do with our child's schooling environment.

Parents Teachers

By Dr Thiyagar Nadarajaw, Consultant Paediatrician & Adolescent Medicine Specialist

During a child's growing years, time spent away from home can be as much as 6-8 hours which are spent at school. This will only increase during his college and/or university years later on. Naturally, your child will be influenced by his teachers and peers.

Thus, a conducive school environment is crucial for healthy child and adolescent development. As parents, are we putting enough effort to connect and work closely with his teachers so that our child will benefit from school connectedness? What exactly is school connectedness?

Teacher-student bond

School connectedness refers to a child's confidence and/ or trust in his teachers and whether they care about him as an individual. You can say that your child's school connectedness is high if he is happy or excited to go to school (e.g. because of a particular teacher/class that piques his interest), or that it is low if he is not keen to go.

Why is school connectedness important? Studies have shown that students are more likely to succeed academically when they feel connected to school. In contrast, students less connected to school are

10 • Positive Parenting Vol. 2 2020

more likely to do poorly in studies and engage in high-risk behaviours such as substance abuse, school absenteeism, early sexual initiation, violence and risk of unintentional injury (e.g. when they grow older with drinking and driving, not wearing helmets, etc).

Promoting school connectedness

Parents have a role to play in connectedness, as "life's lessons" start from home. Here's what you can do:

Identify desirable and undesirable behaviours. Be observant of not just

your child's undesirable behaviours, but also your own! A lot of times, children imitate our behaviour, so there's a high chance that they picked it up from you.

 Brush up your listening skills. During conversations, let your child have his say. Don't interrupt him; only say your piece when he is done. If he speaks in a disrespectful manner, call him out on that. Remember to keep things respectful at all times, and he will reciprocate.

• Set fair expectations.

Communicate clearly what your expectations for learning and behaviour are. Learn where your child's strengths and weaknesses lie, and set achievable expectations based on this.

Give appropriate

praise. When giving praise, avoid praises that are too generic or ability-focused (e.g. "Good job!", "You're so smart!", etc) as it would actually do more harm than good. Instead, make sure that it is sincere and specific (e.g. "You worked hard on your studies and did well in the exam, good job!")



The bigger part of school connectedness is dependent on how schools engage with students, starting with encouraging students to communicate openly with teachers. Parents should also take advantage of opportunities to be actively involved in their children's academic and school life.

Attend or schedule meetings with your child's teachers to discuss his behaviour, grades and accomplishments. Alternatively, you can join social media groups. These help facilitate an open communication line among parents and teachers.

Remember to keep an open mind and heart when meeting with your child's teacher. Always be courteous in all your interactions with school staff, teachers and other parents. Lastly, be more considerate and understanding of how demanding a teacher's job is. Don't be afraid to give them appropriate praise for their efforts in working with your child, it will certainly go a long way in helping keep teachers motivated!

So A True Story so

The following real life incident illustrates the importance of school connectedness.

A few years ago I held a forum for secondary school teachers addressing the need to make students inclusive and connected to school.

I threw them a question, "How many of you wish good morning to students?"

The teachers burst into laughter and one replied,

"Doctor, students are the one to wish the teachers, not the other way around"

Me: "Do you wish your school principal?"

School disciplinary teacher:

"Yes, of course. We should respect the boss."

But he was getting restless and voiced out, "Dr Thiyagar, what's the point you are trying to make?"

Me: "Just bear with me for a minute. Can you name a student who irritates you the most?"

Teacher: "Hakimi."

Me: "What does he do to upset you?"

Teacher: "He doesn't wish me and show-face every time he passes by."

Me: "What do you do?"

Teacher: "I pick him to answer difficult questions in class whenever I get a chance."

Me: "Try wishing him good morning every time you see him. Trust me he will change."

The teacher laughed out loud but grudgingly agreed to do so, just to prove me wrong. Two weeks later I bumped into the teacher at Tesco and he was excited to see me.

Teacher: "You were right! The boy is now a changed person. After I started wishing him good morning, within 2 weeks the boy is now respectful towards me and other teachers too! I had a long talk with him last week. He was crying and told me how he was so stressed at home because he came from a broken family with no love shown by his parents. All he wanted was for teachers to notice him and help him as supportive adults at school,"

Fast forward seven months, I met the teacher again. He informed me that the boy is now a student leader with very good attitude and his academic performance has also improved from a very weak student to an average achiever in exams.

What was the reason for this dramatic transformation? He is now CONNECTED to his school environment. It started with a simple "Good morning" and this triggered the change by making a huge difference in this teenager's life. Similarly teachers could provide opportunities for students to improve their interpersonal skills, such as problem-solving, conflict resolution, self-control, communication, negotiation, sharing, and good manners. Other essential survival skills such as listening, stress management, and decision making could be inculcated too. These skills will potentially protect them by reducing stressful life events, increase the adolescent's ability to avoid risks and promote social and emotional competence to thrive in all aspects of life.

Teachers should be more proactive in communicating with students and to do more in helping students plan for their future. Teachers should also encourage students' leadership skills by involving students in various school activities, e.g. setting classroom rules, organising annual sports carnival, etc. School events such as a sports carnival and physical education classes, help promote teamwork and sportsmanship. They also help emphasise the values of fair play and non-violence. PP

Good morning, Hakimi!

My challenge to educators:

Greet each student by name and wish them first!

An educational contribution by





60° DEVELOPMEN

Reserved Allowers

The Most Advanced Innovation Ever by Dugro^{®®}

Our latest formula combined with your love to support 360° Development for NextGen children.

#Perkembangan360NextGen





Advertisement



CLINICALLY PROVEN TO SOOTHE IRRITATED, ITCHY AND EXTRA DRY SKIN

UNLOCK THE POWER OF OATS



COLLOIDAL OAT Locks in moisture for 24 hours



OAT ESSENCE

EXTRACT

Helps relieve itch



OAT OIL Helps strengthen barrier



CERAMIDE Helps prevent the recurrence of extra dry skin







colloidal ozymeal + akin protectant

Clinically proven to help reduce liching and irritation

Clivically shown to so traby's skin

Net Wt. 141g

Dermexa

CREAM

Dermexa

Aveeno Baby

MOISTURIZING WASH colloidal autovezi & soothing asc essence

Formulated to gently cleanse without damaging the skin's barrier Fragrance-free, scop-frce, No added Paraben, Philhalate-free

236 mL

MYNDDAR

.

No added paraben

Hypoallergenic

Phthalate-free
 Fragrance-free

For more information, like us on 🛐 myaveeno

Johnson & Johnson Sdn Bhd | Level 8, The Pinnacle, Persiaran Lagoon, Bandar Sunway, 46150 Petaling Jaya, Selangor Darul Ehsan, Malaysia

Eczema Menu

By Dr Sabeera Begum Kader Ibrahim, Consultant Paediatric Dermatologist

Eczema refers to several skin conditions that cause red, itchy, and/or inflamed skin. It is fairly common during childhood, however, many children outgrow the condition by the time they are 5-years-old.

Atopic dermatitis is a term which some parents might be familiar with, but there are many other causes for eczema, and some conditions that even mimic eczema. For proper treatment and management, it is best to know the exact cause.

Looks like eczema

The phrase "same same but different" certainly applies here. Here are some types of skin conditions:

Atopic dermatitis.

The most common condition, usually present in people who have asthma. This condition degrades the skin barrier, leading to loss of moisture, allowing microorganisms to enter the body. While it usually occurs in infancy or childhood, it can start at any age.

Contact dermatitis.

Sometimes eczema develops due to repeated contact with certain substances which damages the skin barrier, e.g. chemicals, frequent hand washing, or certain metals like

nickel. There are two main types: irritant contact dermatitis and allergic contact dermatitis



Seborrheic dermatitis.

The most common condition among newborns and is frequently referred to as cradle cap. This condition causes thick, yellow and greasy scales on the baby's scalp. Some babies may have widespread skin rash involving the folds especially



around the diaper region.

Papular urticaria.

Caused by a reaction to insect bites, it is more common in children than adults as they have yet to be desensitised to insect bites. It may be caused by mosquitoes, fleas, mites, or any other household/garden insects.

Discoid and nummular

eczema. It appears as discrete, thick and itchy skin lesions that occur on the limbs. While its cause is unknown, it can be triggered by:

- Skin damage caused by insects, scrapes/scratches, or chemical `burns'.
- inflammation (such as atopic dermatitis and/or statis dermatitis) on other parts of the body.

- Dry skin due to poor air humidity (e.g. air cond environment or winter season).
- Certain metals such as nickel.

Pompholyx (also dyshidrotic eczema)

This condition affects the hands/feet, leaving tiny blisters and causing irritation.

- Other skin conditions that are easily mistaken for eczema:
 - **Fungal infections.** Typically caused by a fungus.
 - *Scabies.* Skin infection caused by mites.
 - Lichen simplex chronicus.
 Repetitive scratching/ rubbing can cause the skin to develop this condition, which is a chronic localised itch.

Treat that itch!



To determine the correct cause of his skin condition, check with your child's paediatric dermatologist. The doctor can better advise you on proper treatment and management methods.

Finding out the cause involves determining your child's itch triggers. Avoid exposing him to these itch factors to prevent discomfort and/or possible flare-ups. The doctor will advise you on what protocols to follow when it comes to bathing and moisturising.

Your choice of moisturiser matters too. Select products that are fragrance- and perfume-free (avoid unscented ones too as they may still contain ingredients that can irritate the skin), do not contain any dye or colouring, and opt for cream or ointment types instead of lotion.

Clinically-proven moisturisers offer longer lasting moisturisation, which prevents dry skin. The routine for treating eczema will differ depending on its severity and type, e.g. treatment for dry-skin will be very different from oozing sores.

Also, in the case of eczema-like conditions caused by insect bites, you will need to find and

eliminate the cause. If the cause is bed bugs or dust mites, you will have to thoroughly clean, or replace affected bedding/clothing.

Remember not to jump to any conclusions that your child has atopic dermatitis just because it looks like it. As many skin conditions look like eczema, it is always best to get an expert's opinion. The right diagnosis will ensure you are giving your child the right treatment. **PP**



Living with a Child with A Child with A Child with A Sthma

You definitely have heard of asthma, or may know someone who has it, but how much do you know about it? What would you do if your own child has asthma?

Asthma is the most common chronic respiratory illness among children. About more than 339 million people worldwide are affected by asthma, with the majority in children. The respiratory airways are inflamed and swollen in asthma causing it to be narrowed, leading to the classical symptoms of cough, wheeze and shortness of breath.

Asthma symptoms often disrupt sleep, appetite, exercise and many daily activities, and can result in school absenteeism and parents taking time off to care for the sick child. If the symptoms are acute and severe, it can be a frightening experience for both parents and child, and often involves a visit to the emergency room or hospitalisation.

It is important to recognise asthma symptoms and provide proper and correct treatment. **Quick-relief asthma medications**, like inhaled bronchodilators, are used to treat the acute symptoms of cough and wheeze. However, the cornerstone of asthma treatment is using **long-term preventer medications**, such as inhaled corticosteroids, to prevent the symptoms.

The over-reliance on quick relief medications and noncompliance to preventer medication are associated with poor asthma control and permanent airway narrowing. This is known as airway remodelling, and is due to prolonged airway inflammation; which can then result in long-term loss of lung function. Proper treatment with preventer medication will improve quality of life, prevent asthma symptoms and avoid life-threatening acute asthma attacks.

Guide to asthma management

Proper management of asthma is crucial to achieve

good asthma control, improve quality of life and prevent lifethreatening asthma and death. Work with and follow your child's doctor's advice, and adopt these important measures.



Have an asthma action plan. Work with the doctor to prepare a detailed plan for managing your child's asthma. It should provide clear directions on when to take which medicines, how to identify and avoid triggers, how to recognise and manage asthma attacks, and when to go to the emergency room. Share the plan with your child's caretakers and school staff.



Identify & avoid triggers. A number of outdoor allergens and irritants can trigger asthma attacks, e.g. pet dander, ambient pollution (i.e. haze), mould, respiratory viral infections, tobacco smoke, etc. Have your child tested for allergies. Identifying the allergen can guide you to avoid these triggers for him. Keep your home free from pets, mould, dust and cigarette smoke, and do regular cleaning.



Take medicines as prescribed. Your child's compliance with the treatment is vital for asthma control. Follow the doctor's instructions on which medicines he needs and how to take them. Make sure to differentiate between preventer medicines for long-term use and quickrelief medicines for asthma attacks. If he relies too much on a quick-relief inhaler, his condition is not under control and his treatment plan may need to be adjusted.



Monitor & track. Keep an asthma diary to track his symptoms to recognise his early warning signs and observe how well the treatment is working. Use a **peak flow meter** to measure his airway narrowing. If the reading is lower than normal, it means the airways are getting narrow, and he is at risk of an acute asthma attack.



Know the symptoms. Early warning symptoms may manifest hours or even a day before an asthma attack. Your child may look, act or breathe differently, or complain of feeling uncomfortable. Take note of these signs and promptly administer the appropriate medicine to avoid a severe asthma attack. Get medical attention if the condition does not improve.



• Get vaccinated. It is recommended that children with asthma get flu and pneumococcal vaccines to prevent respiratory infections, which can trigger asthma attacks.



Asthma emergency. It

is important to recognise symptoms and signs of a severe and potentially lifethreatening asthma attack. Call your child's doctor or go to the emergency room immediately if he shows any of these symptoms and signs:

- Constant wheezing and breathlessness, despite repeated use of quick-relief medicines.
- Persistent cough that does not respond to quick-relief medicines.
- Bluish or grey lips and fingernails.
- Retraction or tightening of the rib, chest and neck muscles during inhalation.
- Has trouble talking and can't speak in full sentences.
- Drowsiness and looking tired.

Recognition of asthma in children and starting the proper medication will lead to good asthma control, thus allowing the child with asthma to lead a normal active life. The long-term prognosis of asthma is good with the majority growing into fit young adults. **PP**



Advertisement

The solution for asthma is not "Just Breathe"



ASTHMA ATTACK feels like a fish surviving without water

of your asthma before it controls you



Is your medication controlling both asthma symptoms <u>AND</u> inflammation?

TAKE CHARGE to improve your lung capacity¹

Talk to your healthcare professionals today!

Reference 1. O'Byrne PM, et al. Eur Respir J. 2017;50;pil. 1701103 A Measurge Drought to you by:

AstraZeneca

AstraZeneca Sde Bhd (69730-X) Nucleus Tower, Level 12, No. 10, Jalen Phi 7/6, Mutiara Demansara, 47800 Petaling Jaya, Selangor, Malaysia, Tet: +603 7624 3898 Fax: +603 7624 3999

My, Resolution, MY 4823, 10404/2020



Pneumonia is one of the top five causes of childhood death in Malaysia according to the Department of Statistics. What makes pneumonia deadly to children?

by Dato' Dr Musa Mohd Nordin, Consultant Paediatrician & Neonatologist

Pneumonia is a lung infection that causes the air sacs (alveoli) in the lungs to fill up with fluid or pus, making it difficult to breathe in enough oxygen for the body. Anyone can get infected, but infants, the aged and sick people are the most vulnerable due to their weaker immune systems.

The burden

Globally, around 1.4 million children under 5 years old die every year because of pneumonia. UNICEF has also reported that only few caregivers recognise pneumonia symptoms and only half of the infected children are given the appropriate treatment. As the symptoms are similar to a common cold or flu, many parents may not realise the severity of their child's condition until it is too late.

Types of pneumonia

Doctors may categorise pneumonia into how or where the infection started:

- Hospital-acquired pneumonia occurs during a stay in a hospital or when receiving outpatient treatment. The illness can be more severe as the infectious bacteria may be resistant to antibiotics.
- Community-acquired pneumonia starts

somewhere other than a hospital or healthcare facility and is more common. This type of pneumonia can be caused by bacteria, viruses, fungi or chemicals.

Cause of illness

Pneumonia is also categorised based on the cause.

- Bacteria. Streptococcus pneumoniae (pneumococcus) is the most common cause of bacterial pneumonia, and also the cause of the highest number of pneumonialinked deaths in children. Other bacteria include Haemophilus influenzae type B (Hib), Klebsilla pneumoniae, Chlamydia pneumoniae and others.
- Virus. Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) is the most common cause of viral pneumonia in children. Other viruses include influenza virus (type A and B), rhinovirus (common cold virus), and coronavirus (like COVID-19 and SARS).

- Fungi. Pneumocystis jirovecii is an example of fungi that can cause fungal pneumonia, which is less common and tends to happen to people with chronic health problems or weakened immune systems.
- Chemicals. Different substances in different forms (liquid, gas, small particles) can cause inflammation of the lungs when inhaled. This includes toxic and poisonous chemicals, as well as food and drinks (aspiration pneumonia).

Is it? Is it not?

It can be hard to recognise symptoms in children. Ranging from mild to severe, it also depends on the cause and health status of your child. Symptoms may include:

- Fever
- Cough
- Wheezing
- Rapid breathing
- Trouble breathing
- Skin, lips, or fingertips that look blue
- Symptoms in babies might be vague, like fussiness or trouble feeding.

Early treatment is vital

If treatment is delayed, complications may arise.

- Bacteraemia. The infection spreads into the bloodstream, leading to septic shock and blood pressure dropping to a dangerous level.
- Lung abscesses. Pockets of pus may build up in the lungs. The child may also cough out pus and have a high fever.
- Pleurisy. The pleura (two layers of tissue enveloping the lungs) become swollen and cause a sharp chest pain when breathing deeply. If the swelling is untreated, fluid may fill the area between the pleura, causing pleural effusion ("water around the lungs") and empyema (pus collection).
- **Respiratory and organ failure.** The lungs may be unable to function properly enough to transfer oxygen to the blood and remove carbon dioxide from the blood. This can be life-threatening as organs such as the kidneys and heart may also fail to function as normal.

Protection against pneumonia



- Protect. Practise proper hygiene and hand-washing, provide optimal nutrition, avoid indoor pollution and smoking, and reduce other risk factors.
- Prevent. Immunisation against pneumococcus, influenza, Hib, measles and pertussis is vital. Vaccines for Hib, measles and pertussis are part of our National Immunisation Programme (NIP) and pneumococcal vaccine will be introduced soon in NIP. The annual influenza vaccine is available in public and private healthcare facilities.



• **Treat.** Prompt and correct symptom identification is crucial to ensure early and appropriate care, which plays a role in treating pneumonia and preventing further complications and death. If uncertain, it is best to seek doctors' advice early on to be sure, rather than waiting for your child's condition to worsen.

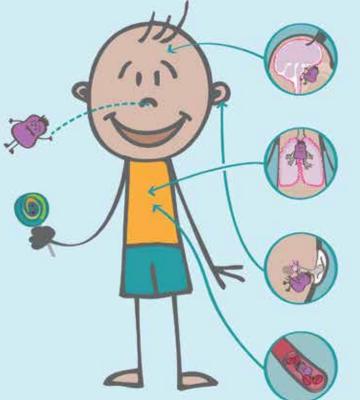
For pneumonia, early treatment is crucial for a higher survival rate. In any case, it is best to take protective and preventive measures always. **PP** An educational contribution by



Advertisement

OF PNEUMOCOCCAL DISEASE¹

IT'S AN **INFECTION** CAUSED BY BACTERIA CALLED **STREPTOCOCCUS PNEUMONIAE** AND CAN LEAD TO:¹



MENINGITIS

Infection of the protective layers covering the brain and spinal cord

PNEUMONIA Infection of the lungs

MIDDLE EAR INFECTION

Infection of the middle ear called Acute Otitis Media (AOM)

BACTEREMIA Infection in the bloodstream

These can be serious and have complications, but it is possible to help prevent them¹

TALK TO YOUR DOCTOR ABOUT HOW YOU CAN HELP PROTECT YOUR CHILD

For further information please contact your doctor.

References 1 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Pneumococcal Disease. Symptoms & Complications. Available at: http://www.cdc.gov/pneumococcal/about/index.html (Last accessed: Dec 2015)

MY/SYN/0028/16(1) 10/18 | GlaxoSmithKline Pharmaceutical 5dn. 8hd. (3277-0) | D 2018 GSK group of companies or its licensor.



Boosting Your Child's Immune System against Infectious Diseases

By Prof Dr Raja Affendi Raja Ali, Consultant Physician & Gastroenterologist

A strong immune system depends on many factors – one of which is a good digestive health. This will trigger the questions; how are these two related, and how can you improve your child's digestive health? The basics of good health are simple enough in theory, i.e. eat healthy nutritious food, get plenty of exercise, drink enough water every day, manage stress levels and get enough sleep daily. What you may not be aware of is the importance of something called `gut microbiota', which is basically a collection of trillions of microorganisms that live in the gut ecosystem.

Gut microbiota have many functions and help your child's body with not just digesting food and extracting nutrients, but can even influence his immune system. In fact, the gut has been acknowledged as the first line of defense against disease. The Greek physician Hippocrates, the Father of Medicine, went so far as to say, "All disease begins in the gut".

Immunity and digestive health

The gut, or the gastrointestinal tract, accounts for 80% of our immune system, and gut microbiota play a major role

in influencing it. But how does the good bacteria help our immune system?

How does good bacteria help our immune system?

- They form a protective layer on the intestinal walls that prevents bad bacteria from passing through.
- The good bacteria can also alert our body's immune cells to the presence of infection-causing pathogens. The immune cells then attack these invaders directly.

Basically the good bacteria in our gut microbiota supports our immune system. Although not always on the frontlines battling the bad bacteria and germs, the gut microbiota strengthens our body's defences system.

Thus, for your child's digestive health to remain strong, it's best if his gut microbiota contains an optimum level of good bacteria in the gut ecosystem. Studies have shown that having a healthy gut microbiota balance enhances immunity and improves our quality of life. These improvements can be as simple as preventing or minimising the occurrence of antibiotic-associated diarrhoea. In 2018, a local study performed by researchers at Pusat Perubatan Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (PPUKM) showed that probiotics in the form of cultured milk drinks helped to improve symptoms in the case of irritable bowel disease.

Mighty little microbes

So how do you achieve this gut microbiota balance in your child? On top of the basics of good health, include probioticrich food in his diet, such as kimchi, tempeh, yoghurt and cultured-milk drinks. Probiotics are essentially the 'good' bacteria that provide positive benefits to health when consumed in sufficient amounts.

Some studies have found that certain diseases, such as influenza, can adversely affect gut microbiota, causing an imbalance in the ratio of good and bad bacteria. This then affects our digestive health, which in turn affects our overall health.

As infectious diseases such as influenza are common and tend to happen frequently throughout the year, there are certain precautions that you can observe, especially during an outbreak of influenza-like illnesses such as the COVID-19 pandemic.



Minimise physical proximity and/or contact with others; practice social distancing



Avoid crowded places



Wear an appropriate facemask when going out (to protect yourself from infection and to protect others if you happen to be sick)



Avoid travelling overseas



Avoid touching your mouth, eyes, and nose, especially after touching potentially contaminated surfaces when outside



Provide your family with good nutrition and drink sufficient water, especially if forced to stay at home because of quarantine or MCO (movement control order)



Exercise at home to keep healthy



Practise good hygiene (hand sanitisation, proper hand-washing, etc)

Advertisement

RAIN OR SHINE, KEEP YOUR IMMUNITY STRONG.

When your immunity is strong, you don't fall sick easily. VITAGEN contains 2 strains of live probiotic cultures that have been clinically proven for optimal gut health. After all, a strong immune system begins from the gut.

O vitagen_malaysia

* Reference: Mokhtar N, et al. (2018). Modulation of intestinal dysbiosis in patients with constipation-predominant irritable bowel syndrome using lactobacillus-containing cultured milk drink. Gut 2018;67:A70. https://gut.bmj.com/content/67/Suppl_2/A70.2

VITAGENMalaysia



Cotra Enterprises Sdn. Bhd. (95503-11)

www.vitagen.com.my



Travelling always involves new adventures—be it through new culinary treats, places to explore, or meeting new people. However, these may come with an **increased risk of exposure to** various diseases. Know the vaccinations needed for your next family vacation.

Recommended vaccination according to travel destination



Adapted from World Health Oragnization. International Travel and Health. 2009.

Travel with ease of mind knowing that you and your family are protected. Consult your doctor on protection against vaccine-preventable diseases today.

References: 1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Travelers' health—before you travel, Available at https://www.nc.cdc.gov/travel/page/before-travel. Accessed on 19 February 2020. 2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Travelers' health—last-trianale travelers. Available at https://www.nc.cdc.gov/travel/page/before-travel. Accessed on 19 February 2020. Health Organization. Infection diseases of potential risk for travelers. Inclusion Travel and Health 2020, Available at https://www.nc.cdc.gov/travel/page/before-travel. Accessed on 19 February 2020. Accessed on 20 Mond Much 2020. Available at https://www.nc.cdc.gov/travel/page/before-travel. Accessed on 20 Mond 2020. Accessed on 20 Mond 2020.

A community message brought to you by:



SANOFI PASTEUR c/o sanofi-aventis (Malaysia) Sdn. Bhd. (104110-P)

Unit TB-18-1, Level 18, Tower B, Plaza 33, No 1 Jalan Kemajuan, Seksyen 13, 46200 Petaling Jaya, Selangor Darut Ehsan, Malaysia. Tel: +603.7651.0800 Fax: +603.7651.0801/0802 Is your family travelling somewhere for the next holiday? Be prepared and protect yourself and the family from illness to avoid turning a fun vacation into a trip to the emergency room!



Guide to a Healthy Holiday

By Datuk Dr Zulkifli Ismail, Consultant Paediatrician & Paediatric Cardiologist

The recent COVID-19 pandemic has had a huge impact on all of us. Drastic measures such as lockdown and restriction of movement had to be imposed to prevent the spread of the pandemic. Many people are still cautious about travelling outside their home country. If you are planning to go somewhere for a family trip in future, take safety precautions to ensure your family stays healthy and protected.

Preparation for safe and healthy travel

Know your family's health status. Consult

your doctor before the trip. Family members with preexisting medical conditions should get their supplies of required medications. Prepare a bracelet to identify your child's condition or allergies, plus important contacts, in case of emergency. Everyone's routine vaccinations should be up to date. If anyone

is sick, it's better to postpone the trip. There are always other holiday seasons to plan for.



Apply for travel insurance.

This is important in case of unexpected events – trip cancellations,

lost belongings and health emergencies. There may be different types of insurance for different cases; your insurance provider will advise according to your specific needs.

Study the destination. Are

there any endemic diseases or on-going outbreaks at the destination? There may be

27 • Positive Parenting Vol. 2 2020

required or recommended vaccinations if you are going to another country. For example, Malaysians are advised to take yellow fever vaccination at least 10 days before travelling to Brazil, Argentina, Peru, Congo, Ethiopia, Nigeria and other risky countries. The risks of other diseases, such as diarrhoea and malaria, are also higher

in certain countries.



Travel vaccines

Apart from the routine vaccinations listed in the National Immunisation Programme (NIP) required during childhood, there are also recommended vaccines for travel, such as:

- Pneumococcal: Happens worldwide but more common where the vaccine is not routinely used.
- **Meningococcal:** If travelling to the African meningitis belt.
- **Rotavirus:** Highly contagious, it causes diarrhoea and severe dehydration in infants and young children.
- **Cholera:** An acute diarrhoeal infection from contaminated food or water, and poor hygiene.
- **Typhoid:** 75% of cases happen while travelling, from contaminated food or water.
- Hepatitis A: If you are travelling to developing countries where sanitation is poor.
- **Influenza:** Highly recommended when travelling during flu season.
- Yellow fever: Most prevalent in Africa and South America.

During the trip

• Eat and drink safely.

Best to consume thoroughly cooked food that is served hot. Stick to bottled or hot drinks. Ice may be made of tap water in some countries, so avoid it. Have fresh fruits that are washed and peeled yourself. Frequently wash hands with soap and water (or hand sanitisers) before and after eating, and after using the toilet.

Prevent insect bites.

Mosquito, ticks, fleas and flies can spread dangerous diseases like dengue, typhus or malaria. Apply insect repellent and wear long pants and sleeves for protection. Insect repellent should not be applied on babies under 2 months old.

 Avoid animal bites. Do not pet or handle wild or street animals, even kittens and puppies. If anyone is bitten or scratched, thoroughly rinse with soap and water, and seek further treatment at the nearest clinic!

 Prevent sunburn. Use sunscreen that protects against both UVA and UVB rays. Apply sunscreen first and wait for it to dry before applying insect repellent. Best to apply every 2 hours and immediately after swimming or excessive sweating, even if you are using SPF 30 and above.

 Prioritise physical safety. Wear protective gear for adventure activities. Supervise children at all times around and in water. Do not swim in fresh water where sanitation is doubtful, as infections such as leptospirosis may be present.

• First aid items

What to pack?

- Sunscreen
- Insect repellent
- Over-the-counter medicines
 - Prescribed medicines

• Ensure road safety.

The vehicle you are using should have seatbelts and other safety features. Make sure your child rides in age-appropriate child car seats. Avoid travelling in an overloaded bus.

A family holiday is a good opportunity to spend more quality time with your family. But new places present various unexpected risks, which can put your family's health and safety at risk. Being prepared and vigilant keeps family vacations safe, healthy and stress-free. Continue to follow the SOPs outlined by the authorities as the COVID-19 pandemic is not over yet! **PP**

An educational contribution by

Malaysian Paediatric Associatio

Nutrition & Healthy Living

Mik Formulated By Dr Tee E Stong, Nutrition ist and President, Nutrition Society of Malaysia (NSM)

Rich in nutrients, milk is one of the best choices to complement a child's diet and promote healthy growth and development. When we talk about milk, various types come to mind – fresh milk, full-cream milk, UHT milk and flavoured milk. A child can consume these milk variants as they contain the needed nutrients.





It should however be emphasised that low-fat milk and skimmed milk are **not** recommended for children. Removing fat from these milk also removes some important nutrients such as fatty acids and fat-soluble vitamins.

Parents can also consider giving their toddlers or preschool children milk formulated for kids. Formulated milk powder for children (FMPC) has been prepared for children of different ages and fortified with various nutrients. Read on to find out more about FMPC and how to use these appropriately to contribute to meeting the nutrients needed by your children.

Why FMPC?

Today, both parents in many families take up full time jobs to make ends meet. Thus, they may be too busy or do not have the opportunity to provide a balanced diet for their kids. These growing children are left to the care of their grandparents, nannies or day-care centres.

These caregivers may overlook the nutritional requirements of the children or give in to their unhealthy requests. Because of this, kids may develop poor dietary habits by frequently having a high intake of sugar, salt, fat and oil, or insufficient fruits and vegetables. Picky eaters may face more severe nutritional consequences if parents fail to pay attention to their diet while they are still young.

Under such circumstances, FMPC can be recommended as part of the child's daily diet, to help fill the nutrient gaps that arise from a poor diet. FMPC, previously referred to as "growing-up formula", is a product formulated based on the nutritional requirements (nutritionists call these recommended nutrient intake or RNI) for growing children aged one to nine. These products are also fortified with various nutrients and other food components to enhance their nutritional value.

Fortification of FMPC

Food Regulations 1985 has stipulated that every FMPC product follows a standard in terms of quality and nutrient content in order to meet nutritional needs of growing children. It must contain a specified concentration of fat and protein, a minimum amount of energy, and a number of vitamins and minerals. FMPC is a good source of various essential nutrients readily available in milk, such as protein, calcium, potassium, phosphorus, and several vitamins such as vitamin D, A, B12 and riboflavin. However, to further enhance the nutritional value of FMPC, it may be fortified with several nutrients to increase their concentrations and to add nutrients and other food components not found in milk in significant amounts. Here are some examples:

Vitemain D	Holes boost colorium absorption and promotes hone arouth		
Vitamin D	Helps boost calcium absorption and promotes bone growth.		
Vitamin A	Essential for vision, healthy skin and immune system.		
Iron	Prevents anaemia; important component of various enzyme systems.		
Zinc	Essential for growth and immune system.		
DHA	Important for brain, eye and nerve tissue development.		
Prebiotics (e.g. galacto- oligosaccharide (GOS), fructo-oligosaccharide (FOS))	Promotes the growth of good bacteria in the gut and helps digestion.		

Appropriate use of FMPC

FMPC is positioned as a supplement to the daily diet of a growing child, and not to replace her regular meals. It is recommended to use this milk to provide up to 1/3 of the recommended daily nutrient needs of a child. But remember, **a balanced and varied diet is still a priority**. Milk, regardless of type, should not be the sole source of nutrients.

Consider these:

• Choose based on the child's age range. FMPC in the market are available with slightly different nutrient composition, targeted for children of various age categories. It would be wise to select one appropriate for the child's age.



Check the label/nutrition info panel

- Don't be confused with the complicated terms or ingredients on the label. Do your research and find out what they mean. Certain claims may be doubtful, and sometimes these are just marketing terms.
- Choose products with less or no added sugar by checking the ingredient list. Note that sugar may be

listed as different names such as sucrose, dextrose, glucose, fructose. You can also compare the sugar content in different products. Flavoured milk generally have higher sugar content.

With almost all essential nutrients found in milk, it is an important part of a child's diet. Choose the suitable milk products for your kids depending on their needs and taste preferences, as well as your financial means. Encourage your children to drink milk to meet the recommended intake of 2-3 servings daily, in addition to their **regular balanced meals** for healthy growth and development. **PP**

An educational collaboration with





Natural Nutrient^{*}. Easy Digestion for Stronger Inside.

Friso





100% from Holland

LocNutr

Refers to essential-nutrient found in milk protein.

Are We Over-scheduling Our Kids? By Dr Cindy Chan Su Huay, Developmental & Behavioural Paediatrician

Looking back, childhood experiences have vastly changed from our time. Change is inevitable, but what about the cost to our children?

Do you remember your childhood? Were they filled with hide-and-seek, skipping ropes, playing tag and card games? Did you play because your parents told you to, or was it more spontaneous, when friends, siblings and cousins just rounded up and played?

Our children are unlikely to share the same childhood we had. Today, the norm for many kids is for them to be shuttled from Taekwondo to swimming or from Math to Speech & Drama classes. Parents become GrabCar Mums and Dads, as we drive our children from one class to another.

As a mother of three myself, I get it. We are raising our children in a different world. We want our children to have the opportunities that our own parents may not have been able to provide us. Academic demands are getting more challenging. We are bombarded with news of child geniuses and teen entrepreneurs who blazed a trail at an unnaturally early age.

However, what is the cost of this new drive to 'give our children the best head-start'? We start from the right place, but are we charting the right path for each child? Are we placing so many stopovers of non-stop enrichment that we have no time to enjoy the journey? Signs your child may be overwhelmed

Anxiety

Is your child showing signs of anxiousness, reluctance to attend a class, or refusing to continue with a programme? Does she suffer from poor sleep? Common signs of anxiety in an overwhelmed child are changes in behaviour/ sleep pattern or inability to concentrate on tasks/ lessons.

Counterproductive grades

Signing your child up for the best Math tuition class may not result in the grades you hope for. Each child has a different learning style and too much studying can be counterproductive. Rote learning teaches the child to

recognise specific questions, but she will be stumped by unfamiliar ones. Endless worksheets may see her kicking back in protest. There is simply no room for her to exhale and take a step back.

"I'm just not good enough"

This is the inner monologue your child may have, which you may never hear. Being compared to her peers or siblings may cause her to feel as if she will never be able to measure up. Trying to keep up may burn her out and she will start to feel nothing she does is ever good enough.

Every child is different

We recognise that every child is different. Some handle stress better than others, while some need more breathing space. What can you do to help your child find the right balance?

• More free play

Structured enrichment should not displace free play. Go outdoors and just let your child be. Parents need not supervise every form of play. Children need opportunities to problem-solve and make their own decisions, without



a teacher or adult hovering nearby to give suggestions.

Find time for playdates with friends or cousins. Group dynamics are a fantastic way for children to learn teamwork.

Good old-fashioned house chores

Kids today are less likely to be assigned chores. They are either too busy with school and enrichment classes, or often than not, we do everything. House chores are great opportunities for children to learn responsibility and diligence while contributing in a meaningful way to the family.

You may be surprised to find your child is eager to help around the home. Helping out with chores provides a natural hum in his rhythm, allowing him to switch off from school demands and homework.

Doing dishes or cooking a meal together with your

child, also provides a precious opportunity to bond over the day's events.



• Schedule to un-schedule

This may sound ironic, but perhaps forcing a "no class time" in his schedule is something he needs. Find those pockets of downtime and ring-fence them. No classes, no worksheets, no

homework, no competitions. Replace them with less demanding activities reading, playing board games, watching a movie or going for a walk.

Share this `un-scheduling' with your child. When the week gets too much, have him look forward to these periods of free time. Having that goal of downtime can help motivate your child to get through an intensive week.

At times, our desire to give our children the best can lead to unexpected setbacks. An overwhelmed child is not a happy child. Stress and anxiety in children are reaching unprecedented levels. We need to strike the right balance between providing enrichment to expand our child's potential, but at the same time, we need to know when to pull back when it's too much.

Understand that each child is unique and some are more ready than others. One of the best quotes that help me realise each child is different is this: Every child has a gift. They just open their gifts at different times of their lives. **PP**

An educational contribution by



Self-Harm in Teens

Tina's mother was worried. Tina* had not come out of her room for the last 5 hours and missed her dinner. At 9 pm, her best friend rang to say that Tina had posted a picture of herself with cuts on her wrist on her social media profile.

*Name for illustration purposes only and does not refer to any specific individual

What is self-harm?

Self-harm refers to acts which individuals carry out with the intention of harming themselves. Self-harming is more common in teenagers and young adults. Usually, girls are more prone to selfharming behavior than boys.

Examples of self-harming behaviour

- Overdosing on medication
- Self-poisoning
- Self-cutting
- Self-hitting

Why do some teenagers self harm?

A number of teenagers who self-harm do so on an impulse. These are actions carried out at the spur of the moment, without any intention to commit suicide. They may be seeking relief from the build-up of tension, as a way to distract themselves or escape from painful feelings. Some may find themselves overwhelmed by strong emotions during a stressful situation and feel that they cannot find an alternative.

For some teenagers, inflicting cuts that are visible may be an expression of deep emotional wounds and scars which they feel inside. Others may be driven by strong feelings of rage towards others, or even towards themselves. Some teens may try to influence someone else through self-harming behaviour.

We should be especially concerned and vigilant if we observe any of the following:

- A person becomes withdrawn and repeatedly speaks about wanting to end life.
- Dangerous methods of self-harm are chosen.
- A person takes elaborate steps to avoid being discovered.

A small proportion of individuals who self-harm may have the intention to commit suicide.

Factors which make some teenagers more prone to self-harming behaviour

 Experiences of physical, emotional or sexual abuse. Victim of bullying. Depression. Feeling hopeless or worthless. High levels of anxiety. Prone to impulsive behavior. Poor problem-solving skills. Difficulty making decisions. Consumption of illegal drugs or alcohol. Parental divorce or separation. Conflict and violence within the family. Living in poverty. Difficulty adjusting to a new environment, e.g. moving to a new city. Social isolation and lack of supportive friends. Quarrels with friends. Break-up with boyfriend/girlfriend. Exposure to friends who have self-harmed. Exposure to self-harming on social media. 	Personal & psychological issues	Family & social issues	Situational factors
	emotional or sexual abuse. • Victim of bullying. • Depression. • Feeling hopeless or worthless. • High levels of anxiety. • Prone to impulsive behavior. • Poor problem-solving skills. • Difficulty making decisions. • Consumption of illegal drugs	 Conflict and violence within the family. Living in poverty. Difficulty adjusting to a new environment, e.g. moving to a new city. Social isolation and lack of supportive friends. 	 boyfriend/girlfriend. Exposure to friends who have self-harmed. Exposure to self-harming

Warning signs Some actions may be visible to others. A teen may attempt self-harm during an argument, or upload posts about their actions on social media.

Others may retreat behind locked doors and hurt themselves in secret. Look out for signs of self-cutting: unexplained wounds on the forearms or wrists, wearing long sleeves to cover wounds, bloodstains on clothes, bed linen or blood-stained tissues in the trash and keeping sharp objects such as razors or knives.

What can parents do?

Never dismiss or ignore the problem. Avoid scolding or making hurtful remarks. Self-harming is a signal that a teenager is having difficulty coping and in need of help.

Try to understand. Are

there any personal or family issues which could make your child more prone to selfharming behaviour? Has there been any recent incident, such as a disagreement with a family member? Are there difficulties at school? (refer to the Table above) Remember that there sometimes multiple factors which lead to self-harm, and the specific reasons may be different for each person.

Listen to your child. Have

you been too busy to have daily conversations with your



child? Teenagers may keep problems to themselves when they feel no one is listening. Some problems can be difficult to reveal, such as bullying or sexual abuse. Set aside time to explore what is troubling him or her. Reassure your child that you are there to help.

Seek professional help.

Ensure that your child receives

medical attention to check for any serious injury or harm. It is equally important for doctors to identify any psychological problem that requires treatment such as depression and to assess the risk for repeat incidents. A psychologist or counsellor could teach your child techniques to reduce anxiety, calm their emotions and relieve stress. They could help them to build coping skills such as how to tackle problems or communicate with others. They could also advise parents on appropriate ways to communicate with and support their child. **PP**

An educational contribution by







Poor gut health? Poor digestion & appetite? Fall sick easily?

Healthy Guts for Stronger Kids!



ONE sachet daily to restore the balance of kid's gut microbiota



6 Billion CFU per sachet (1 g) formulated specially for growing kids





3 clinically proven probiotics strains

PROVE

Contains 500mg of inulin (prebiotic) No refrigeration is required







8

MAL18026040NCF

Benefits of taking Biogrow Probiotics KIDS Powder



Promote growth of beneficial gut bacteria



Improve bowel function



Available in all leading pharmacies nationwide.

A Product of Legosan (Malaysia) Sdn. Bhd. Company No.: 199301029457 (284196-H) Call Infoline: 03-7956 2220 (Mon - Fri : 9am - 5pm) Email: info@biogrow.com.my Website: www.biogrow.com.my Distributed by: Summit Company (Malaysia) Sdn. Bhd. Company No. 196801000159 (7775-T) Lot 6, Jalan 19/1, 46300 Petaling Jaya, Selangor.

This is a supplement product advertisement. KKLJU 2619/2018