

Positive Parenting Malaysia

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

Preparing Children for the **Real World**

Cultivating
**Good
Posture**
in Kids

**Healthy
Breakfast**
A Good
Morning Habit

**Celebrity
Obsession**
Among Teens

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expert
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management
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Datuk Dr Zulkifli Ismail

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



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“Parental awareness
and education
is vital in raising
healthy children.”



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“Healthy eating habits
and active living habits
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“If a child cannot learn in the
way we teach, we must teach
in a way the child can learn.”



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central to raising children
with values and principles.”



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resilience starts with
the family.”



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Chairman, Positive Parenting Management Committee
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Real World, Real Challenges

After the pandemic (which still has not fully subsided), the world is currently facing an economic downturn. Many people lost their jobs and many businesses have to close down during the pandemic. But just as the situation is starting to improve, we now have to deal with rising prices of goods and foods due to multiple reasons. As parents and adults, this is part and parcel of the "real world" that we simply have to deal with.

However, how can we prepare our children to help them face the challenges of the real world as they grow up? Is it simply enough to provide them with good education and ensure that they score straight A's in their exams? The Feature article in this issue highlights the importance of life skills, soft skills and positive values in preparing our loved ones for adulthood, or what we refer to as the "real world".

Various other parenting issues are also discussed by our experts from different fields, including the importance of premarital screening, how to cultivate good posture in children, tips on vaccine aftercare, as well as the issue of celebrity obsession among teens.

Hopefully our articles in this issue will aid you to sail through parenthood with ease. We also invite you to access past articles on our website to learn about other relevant topics not touched on in this issue. While browsing your social media, do check us also on Facebook (Positive Parenting Malaysia) and Instagram (@mypositiveparenting) for easy tips, informative posters and educational videos.

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.

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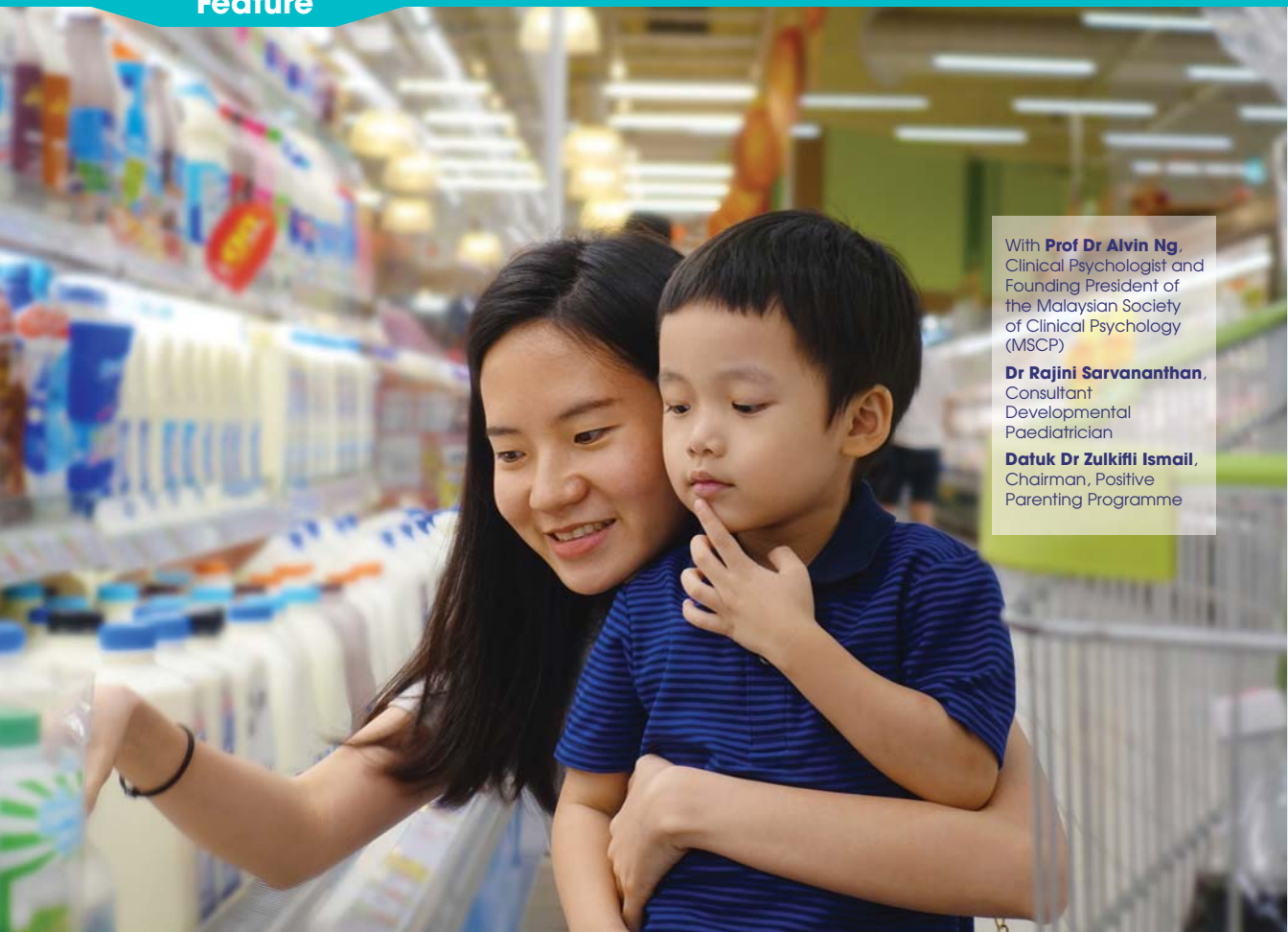
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Consultant
Developmental
Paediatrician

Datuk Dr Zulkifli Ismail,
Chairman, Positive
Parenting Programme

Preparing Children for the Real World

Are you one of those “tiger parents” who insists your child gets straight A’s at school? Positive Parenting advocates that in order to prepare your children for the real world, mums and dads should be concerned with more than just academic learning. They should also focus on helping their children learn and develop life skills, as well as positive values, so they grow up to be well-rounded, responsible and caring individuals.

Importance of life skills and soft skills in adulthood

Prof Dr Alvin Ng, Founding President of the Malaysian Society of Clinical Psychology, says that children are too often defined by their grades, while life and soft skills are put on the backburner.

"The truth is that while grades are indeed a good indicator of one's strengths and do highlight areas to improve, they should never be the *only* thing parents focus on. It's just as important to devote your attention to building up your child's adaptive skills and competencies such as problem-solving and critical thinking," said Prof Ng.

Children with problem-solving skills, according to the clinical psychologist, learn how to manage their emotions, think creatively and persist until they find a solution to their problems. In turn, they grow up to be more confident and independent individuals who are not easily frustrated or disheartened when something doesn't go their way.

The COVID-19 pandemic was a good example of how problem-solving and creative/critical thinking skills helped many grown-ups cope with losing their jobs and having to work from home. When they landed in uncharted territory, those with these types of life skills persisted and found a way to move on.

Prof Ng adds that friendship skills are also crucial for adult life. "We don't really make it

a point to help our children emotionally navigate their different relationships as much as we should," he said. "Try having open and honest conversations with your kids about their friends; and as they grow up, their more mature relationships with boyfriends and girlfriends, which may even result in marriage."

Learning how to deal with relationships when your child is young will certainly be an advantage when he or she grows up and starts a family of their own. Relationships are tricky and feelings are complicated. The sooner you grasp how to handle them, the better.

Prof Ng says parents should make it a point to discuss problems and validate their children's feelings. "Validation is the crux of relationships that often tends to be missed out. People value acceptance and are very afraid of rejection. Validation helps to maintain that sense of acceptance, which strengthens relationships."



Another aspect that parents can actively teach and role-model for their kids is managing health and finances. "Teach your child to build up healthy habits that go beyond the usually discussed nutrition, exercise, rest and sleep – try limiting screen time by having family reading time and encourage your child to read food labels when grocery shopping. This teaches them to make better choices for health and budget. You can also engage in physical activities as a family – try attending zumba or yoga classes together, and of course, make time to play badminton, go swimming and

hiking together as all are great ways to connect and create bonds.

You want to also help your child build a sense of community, as well as an ecological responsibility and accountability. "Or what I like to call a planetary health approach," Prof Ng says. "This really puts wellness into context. Because for one to be well, our community, and really, the whole planet, needs to be well too."



The right thing at the right time

Consultant Developmental Paediatrician **Dr Rajini Sarvananthan** shares that it's important to teach children different values at different stages in their lives.

From a young age, you can start instilling the notion of gender equality. "Both sons and daughters can be encouraged to participate in chores like making their beds, folding their laundry and putting it away, helping out in the kitchen and taking out the garbage. When carrying out do-it-yourself projects at home – for example, if you were making a playhouse for your children or painting the bedroom – mums and dads can get kids to help out by handing them tools, holding equipment, suggesting ideas and other simple tasks."

As they grow older, start to offer them opportunities to engage with the community around them. Here, parents can role model tolerance and

respect for others. Teach your child to care and respect elders, starting with their grandparents, as well as elderly folk they may run into at the park or restaurants.

Encourage them to take part in neighbourhood activities such as *gotong royong*, community gardening and festive gatherings. Make it a point to talk about our different cultures and how and why people celebrate and observe different festivals.

Dr Rajini says involving children in understanding money matters can start early on too. Turn your day-to-day activities into learning experiences for them. Trips to the ATM and shopping mall can provide opportunities for you to talk about your values and how you use money.

When children are very young, you can work the concepts of money into games, like



pretend-playing that you are at a shop or restaurant. When they grow older, you can show your children how you budget your money for the month and encourage them to save for things they would like to buy.

Teach your children how to effectively communicate with those around them and provide opportunities for them to converse with people outside their family circle. For example, learning how to interact with other adults at a store or at a dinner party.

Dr Rajini adds that teamwork, time management and a sense of responsibility are



own pets and going shopping together are just some types of activities that you can do together so your children develop these skills organically.

In time, they will learn to have a broader view, and not just learn to take care of themselves, but the extended family and community around them.

Prof Ng adds that on top of these, parents should

also be supportive and give their children opportunities to hone their critical thinking, leadership skills, positive attitude, creativity and adaptability.

"When solving problems, or when tackling work at school, we should be encouraging our children to ask questions and to creatively think of ideas, rather than simply look for the "right answer" all the time. It is better to focus on the how and why, which sadly is very much lacking in formal education these days," says Prof Ng.

all teachable skills. Planning and preparing meals together at home, organising family holidays and parties, encouraging your children to feed and groom their

Encourage positive values

When it comes to coping in the real world, **Datuk Dr Zulkifli Ismail**, Chairman of Positive Parenting, feels it is important for parents to bring their children up in faith.

"Spirituality is an integral component in parenting that should not be overlooked. Through spirituality, we can role model and encourage our children to practise positive traits such as gratitude, kindness and empathy," Dr Zulkifli says.

"Communication at home is also very important. As parents, we should be making it a point to share things with our children, so they in turn will learn to listen as well as feel comfortable talking about their lives and their challenges with us. By playing together, praying together, having meals

together, and spending time doing meaningful activities, our bonds will grow stronger and our children will surely learn how to communicate their feelings and thoughts more effectively."

Many of us would fondly remember learning these soft skills – such as how to bake cookies or change a lightbulb or iron a shirt – from our own parents and grandparents or older siblings. It is essential to incorporate this sort of teaching and learning into our children's daily lives too.

Learning these skills is just like learning how to do chores. After all, if you don't throw out the trash, your life will stink! Similarly, if you don't learn

how to be kind to your elders or work together with your community, chances are you won't automatically know how to do these things and you will struggle later in life.

Remember that life is more than grades and scores. To prepare children for the real world, equip them with soft skills and positive values so that they will grow up to be a well-adjusted, wholesome adult. PP



Premarital Screening for A Loving, Lasting Partnership

By **Dr H Krishna Kumar**, Consultant Obstetrician & Gynaecologist and Past President of Obstetrical and Gynaecological Society of Malaysia (OGSM)

The courtship has finally culminated into this momentous occasion. Both of you have decided that marriage is the natural progression to your relationship, and you are willing and ready to proceed. However, among the many considerations that need to be made prior to marriage is premarital health screening, which is extremely important to better equip the couple for a future they will forge together.



What is premarital testing?

Premarital testing is a health check-up for couples who are about to get married. Such check-ups may include various clinical tests which serve the purpose of screening one's current and potential future health problems.

Why is premarital testing important?

1. Such tests may forewarn couples of potential problems if they decide to have children in the future. For example, the early detection of hereditary (genetic) disorders can provide couples with important information to make informed decisions on preventing hereditary conditions.
2. It helps you understand the health condition of your partner (e.g. sexual health, blood type, blood pressure, cholesterol level, etc.), which then makes it easier for both of you to better take care of each other.

What are the required premarital tests in Malaysia?

In Malaysia, there is currently one required premarital test, which is the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) test. This applies to Muslim couples, who are required to officially submit their HIV test results prior to getting married. Although it is only required for Muslim couples, HIV testing before marriage is also recommended for everyone.

What are the recommended premarital tests in Malaysia?

There are no set "recommended" premarital tests. However, the following tests are commonly included in premarital screening packages.

- **General tests:** To provide basic general health information, including blood pressure, height, weight, and body mass index (BMI).
- **Blood screening:** To examine overall health, screening

for blood disorders (e.g. thalassemia, sickle cell anaemia, etc.), and blood type testing (ABO and Rhesus tests).

- **Hepatitis screening:** To determine whether your partner has hepatitis B or C.
- **Sexual health screening:** To check for the presence of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs).

I got my results, what now?

If any test results are of concern, your healthcare practitioner will explain and advise you accordingly. The next step is to share the results with your partner, so you both understand each other's health situations.

A marriage is not just about love. It's also about taking care of each other, for life. Premarital screening equips you with the knowledge to better take care of your partner, and your future family. PP

An educational collaboration with



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Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, influenza or flu cases have been lower than usual. However, as Malaysia and the rest of the world start opening up, it comes with no surprise that the cases of influenza are on the rise again.

Common Misconceptions about Flu Vaccination

By **Dr Husna Musa**, Paediatrician & Lecturer

The human influenza virus was first identified in 1933, but references to the influenza epidemic can be found since the antiquities and the middle ages. In modern times, before the advent of COVID-19, influenza outbreaks occurred almost annually, sometimes on a global scale. Luckily, there is already a way to lessen the impact of the disease: influenza vaccines.

However, as with all things pertaining to vaccines, fake news and baseless rumours abound. As a result, some parents often hesitate to vaccinate their children for fear of adverse consequences.

Fighting misconceptions

Flu vaccines are not safe.

One of the most common misconceptions about flu vaccines is that they are not safe and often give rise to complications. This is abjectly false. Flu vaccines have long had a very good safety record, and even if there are side effects, these are generally mild and usually subside within a day or two.

Many extensive studies have demonstrated not only the safety of such vaccines, but also the benefits that can be derived if a person is vaccinated, such as lowering the risk of major cardiovascular events and lung infections, as well as protection from flu complications.

Flu vaccines can cause flu.

Another misconception is that the influenza vaccine will infect the recipient with the flu. This is also untrue, as the vaccine for influenza is made with a killed or weakened version of the virus or a single protein from the flu virus. Hence, the recipient will not be infected with the flu virus after receiving the vaccine.

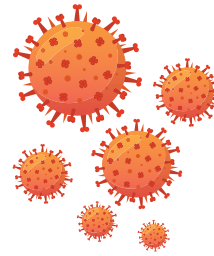


Flu is not dangerous.

Some people may worry more about the side effects of the vaccine compared to the complications of the disease. In most cases, the symptoms of influenza are mild, but complications can escalate to

become fatal and result in hospitalisation or even death, especially for young children, the elderly and those who are immunocompromised or have underlying illnesses.

In fact, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in the United States has estimated that the flu has resulted in 9 million to 41 million illnesses, 140,000 to 710,000 hospitalisations, and 12,000 to 52,000 deaths in the US annually between 2010 and 2020. Hence, the benefits of vaccination substantially outweigh the risks of getting flu.



Vaccination is protection

The flu vaccine provides significant protection against influenza. It reduces the risk of hospitalisation in children and can reduce the risk of developing severe complications. The vaccine also reduces school or workplace absenteeism. The flu vaccine is also advised for pregnant women, who are particularly vulnerable to infection due to the physiological changes that occur during pregnancy.



Time to get vaccinated

Influenza vaccines are administered yearly. This is because the prevailing strains of the virus changes from year to year. In Malaysia, influenza occurs throughout the year, unlike in some countries where there are peak months of transmission. Vaccination should be given on a yearly basis using either the Northern or Southern Hemisphere formulation, depending on which formulation is currently available at the chosen clinic.

Annual vaccination is recommended for children aged 6 months and above. For children under 9 years old

receiving the vaccine for the first time, the 2nd dose should be given after an interval of at least 4 weeks. Consult your child's paediatrician to learn more about getting the flu shots for your little one.

As the saying goes, it is often better to be safe than sorry. As schools and institutions begin opening up and human contact becomes inevitable in our daily lives, the spread of influenza will also increase, putting those unvaccinated at risk of health complications. To



vaccinate or otherwise, the choice is yours and it should not be influenced by fake news, misconceptions and hearsay.

An educational contribution by



Malaysian Paediatric Association



COME OUT STRONGER
PROTECT THEM
BETTER

The COVID-19 pandemic has taught us many lessons. One of the most significant lessons was about protecting our loved ones especially young children, older adults, and those with chronic illnesses. Influenza is out there and with or without COVID-19, it is still dangerous for them.

We've now learnt that we must come out stronger to protect them better. Keep our loved ones safe with the annual flu vaccination.

For more info, visit www.actoflove.ifl.my.



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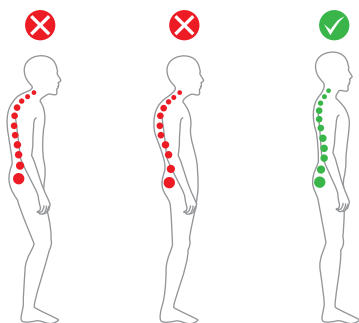


Cultivating Good Posture in Kids

By **Dr Ferdhany Muhamad Effendi**, Orthopaedic Surgeon

Parents are often quick to scold their children for slouching. And for good reason. After all, poor posture can adversely affect their overall health.

Good posture vs poor posture



Ensuring proper posture in your child is important as poor posture can lead to a number of health consequences.

Poor posture can cause:

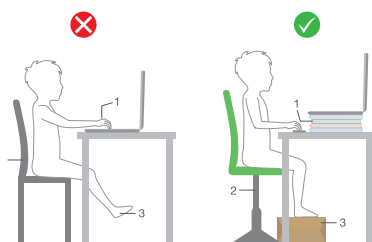
- Abnormal pressure on joint surfaces, which can lead to bone and joint diseases like arthritis.
- Misalignment of the musculoskeletal system (postural deviation), neck/back muscle spasms and pain, overuse injuries, and nerve compression.
- Problems with digestion and restricted respiration (which can lead to breathing difficulties).

On the other hand, **good posture** can:

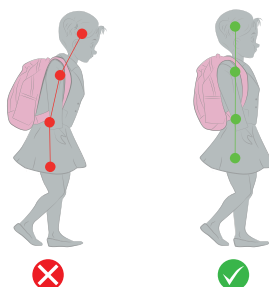
- Align bones and joints, allowing muscles to function optimally.

- Reduce abnormal wear and tear of joint surfaces, as well as excessive stress on ligaments. This can also reduce back, neck, and shoulder pain.
- Maintain optimal circulation, digestion, and respiration.

Tips on cultivating good posture habits in children



- **Use appropriately sized furniture.** Furniture should ideally accommodate the size and height of your child. When children sit with their bottoms positioned at the back of the chair, their feet should be able to touch the floor, and the backrest should provide sufficient support to the lower back and shoulder blades.
- **Use an appropriate backpack.** Backpacks should properly fit the child, with heavier items positioned close to the child's back. Try to keep the backpack as light as possible.



- **Encourage physical activity.** Ensure your child is physically active throughout the day (e.g. taking part in sports, walks in the park, playing outside, etc.). Swimming in particular has been shown to strengthen the body's core muscles, leading to good posture.
- **Limit sedentary activities.** Prolonged sitting should be limited. If necessary, encourage using different positions (e.g. standing, lying on their tummy, etc.) during these activities.
- **Encourage taking active breaks.** When doing activities that require a lot of sitting time (e.g. homework, watching television, etc.), encourage the child to take breaks by walking, moving, or stretching.

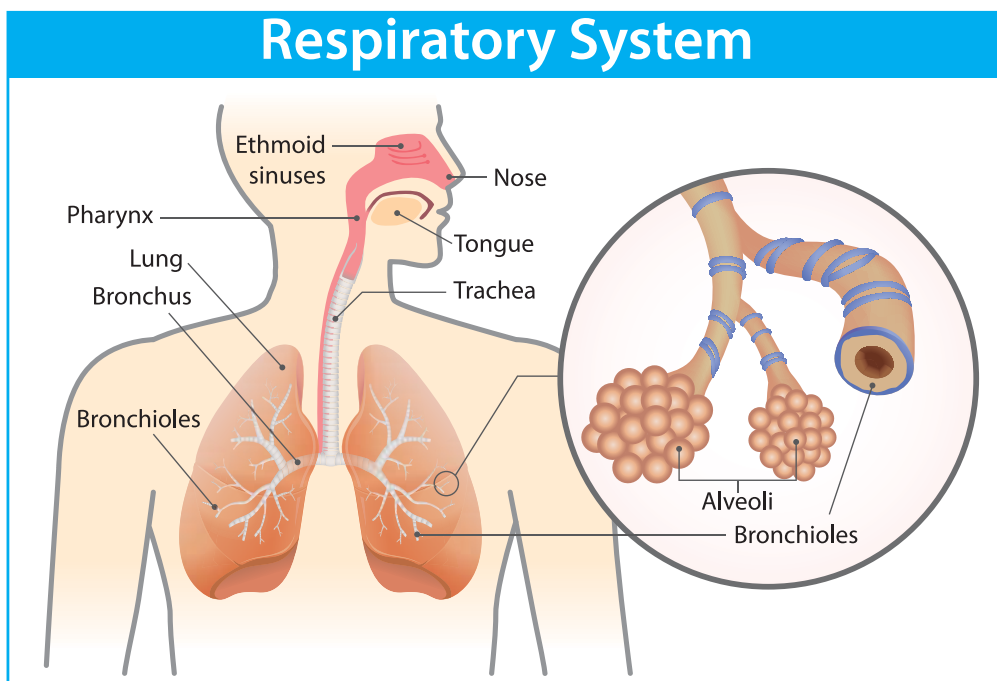
Chiropractic treatment: what parents should know

In Malaysia, chiropractic is considered a form of traditional and complementary medicine (TCM). Some studies claim that it can be used as a complementary treatment for certain conditions. However, there is limited evidence available. Consult your family doctor to assess if chiropractic treatment is right for your child.

Posture can influence the health and development of your child. Therefore, instilling these habits early can help reinforce good posture in your children. PP

Lungs & Respiratory Health

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



A typical symptom of COVID-19 is breathing difficulty. This is a sign that the lungs or the respiratory system have been attacked by the virus. But how much do we actually know about the lungs, and how can we take care of this vital organ?

The lungs are the main organ of the respiratory system. When we breathe in, air fills up our lungs and oxygen in the air is absorbed into the bloodstream. At the same time, carbon dioxide produced by the body is expelled from the bloodstream into the lungs and then exhaled. This gas exchange happens in the alveoli, which are clusters of microscopic air sacs at the end of bronchioles in the lungs. This is called the respiration process, which is vital for any living organism.

In addition, the lungs and the respiratory system also function to:

- Regulate the temperature and humidity of the inhaled air to a proper level for the body.

- Prevent harmful substances from entering the body by coughing, sneezing or filtering them out.
- Facilitate the sense of smell.

Examples of lung problems

- **Pneumonia:** An infection in the lungs caused by pathogenic bacteria or viruses. Other than viruses, the most common cause of pneumonia is *Streptococcus pneumoniae* (also known as pneumococcus).
- **Asthma:** When the airways become inflamed due to certain triggers such as cigarette smoke, dust mites, pet dander, etc. Symptoms include shortness of breath and wheezing.

- **Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD):**

A group of lung diseases, such as chronic bronchitis and emphysema, that cause airflow blockage and breathing issues. COPD is usually caused by smoking, mainly in adults.

- **Pulmonary embolism:**

When a blood clot blocks an artery in the lungs. The most common symptom is sudden shortness of breath.

- **Lung cancer:** The most common cause of cancer death worldwide. Most cases are a consequence of smoking.

- **COVID-19:** Caused by SARS-CoV-2 infection that attacks the respiratory system. COVID-19 can result in long-term lung damage, as well as other respiratory conditions.

How to take care of our lungs

- **Don't smoke or quit smoking:**

Cigarette smoke contains various harmful substances, like nicotine, tar and carbon monoxide, which can irritate the lungs and damage lung tissues over time. In fact, smoking is the leading cause of lung cancer and COPD. If you smoke, it's never too late to quit. Warn your child about the harm of smoking and vaping.



- **Avoid exposure to pollutants:**

Exposure to indoor or outdoor pollutants such as second-hand cigarette smoke, vehicle smoke or chemicals at home or work can be bad for the lungs. Make your home and car a smoke-free zone and ensure proper air ventilation indoors. Avoid exercising or spending time outdoors where there is heavy traffic or when air pollution is bad.



- **Stay active:**

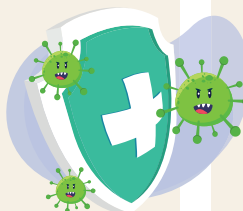
Regular exercise keeps our body healthy and optimises lung function. Aim for 30 minutes of moderate physical activity five days a week. Include aerobic activities like jogging or jumping rope, as well as muscle-strengthening exercises like weightlifting or push-ups. Don't forget to perform deep breathing exercises to improve lung function.



- **Regular check-ups:**

Some lung problems may not show obvious symptoms. Regular check-ups are vital for early detection and treatment of any respiratory problems and prevent it from worsening. During a check-up, your doctor will listen to your breathing, address any concerns and carry out additional tests if necessary.

- **Get vaccinated:** Lung infections can be dangerous, especially for high-risk populations, like children under 5 years old, the elderly and people with a chronic disease. The



best way to prevent a lung infection is via vaccination. Consult a healthcare practitioner to get you and your family vaccinated against pneumococcal disease, influenza and COVID-19.

- **Other preventive steps:**

Practising good hygiene, frequent handwashing, proper sneeze/cough etiquette, wearing face masks, avoiding crowded areas – all these measures have been proven to help mitigate the transmission of respiratory diseases, especially during an outbreak.



Sometimes, we tend to take our lungs for granted. It's only after problems start arising that we regret not taking care of our lungs. The fact is, the lungs are a vital organ that keeps us alive, hence it is crucial to prioritise the health of our lungs and respiratory system. Start taking care of our lungs today! PP

An educational contribution by



Malaysian Paediatric Association

PNEUMOCOCCAL DISEASE CAN BE VERY SERIOUS¹

Don't Wait! Vaccinate Early to Protect Your Little Ones.

The 5 Most Common Strains In Malaysia²

14

19A

19F

6B

6A

YOUNG CHILDREN ARE AT RISK OF GETTING PNEUMOCOCCAL DISEASES. THOSE WITH INCREASED RISK INCLUDE^{3,6}:

HOW DOES IT SPREAD^{3,4}:



< 2 years of age



From a cough or a sneeze



Attend nursery / day care centre



Contact with contaminated items



Weakened immune system due to illnesses and treatment



Close proximity with carriers

MOST PNEUMOCOCCAL INFECTIONS ARE MILD. HOWEVER, SOME CAN BE DEADLY OR RESULT IN LONG-TERM PROBLEMS.⁷



Pneumonia - Inflammation of the lungs⁷



Meningitis - Inflammation of the brain⁷



Acute Otitis Media - Middle ear infection⁷



Bacteraemia - Blood infection⁷

PNEUMOCOCCAL CONJUGATE VACCINES (PCV) CAN BE GIVEN AS EARLY AS TWO MONTHS⁵. CONSULT YOUR DOCTOR FOR MORE INFORMATION.

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My Child Just
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Vaccine Aftercare Tips



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



Many parents worry about the side effects of vaccines. Though these are usually mild, here are some useful tips about vaccine aftercare for children.

Side effects of vaccines

After getting your little one vaccinated, it is common for them to experience some side effects. The majority of vaccine side effects are mild and should resolve within a few hours to a few days.



Examples of common vaccine side effects in children

- Pain, swelling, or redness at the site of injection
- Fever and/or chills
- Headaches
- Muscle pains
- Joint stiffness
- Rashes (particularly with the MMR or chickenpox vaccines)
- Nausea and/or vomiting
- Fatigue or general tiredness
- Loss of appetite

Vaccine aftercare

The jab of a vaccine can be a scary moment for many children. Parents can help to create a better vaccination experience for their child with proper vaccine aftercare.

- **Provide plenty of fluids.** Make sure your child drinks water regularly to keep hydrated.
- **Encourage your child to rest.** Limit physically strenuous activities (e.g. exercise, competitive sports) and social activities (e.g. going out to meet friends). Instead, encourage your child to partake in activities that require less physical exertion like watching TV, reading a book, drawing, etc.
- **Make sure they get enough sleep.** Getting some sleep may be difficult for a child who is experiencing some side effects. Encourage and help your child to get some sleep because it helps to support their immune system.
- **Give some extra love and care.** Particularly with younger children, setting aside some extra cuddles and comfort time can go a long way.



Coping with specific symptoms

Pain, swelling, or redness at the site of injection

- Applying a cool damp cloth or a wrapped ice pack on the site of injection may help soothe the area.
- Encourage your child to gently move the affected limb. This can help prevent further stiffness by loosening up sore muscles.
- Prevent your child from touching, scratching, or rubbing the site of injection to prevent further irritation.
- Consider an analgesic like paracetamol or ibuprofen.

Fever and/or chills

- Dress your child lightly to reduce discomfort.
- Consider an anti-pyretic such as paracetamol or ibuprofen.

Over-the-counter (OTC) medications

Many over-the-counter (OTC) pain relief medications are available for children, like paracetamol (also known as acetaminophen) or ibuprofen. These medications have analgesic (pain-relieving) and antipyretic (fever-reducing) properties, which can help to relieve many post-vaccination symptoms. Analgesics can help reduce pain/swelling/redness at the site of injection, headaches, and muscle/joint pains, while antipyretics can help reduce fevers.

However, acetylsalicylic acid (ASA – also known as aspirin) **should not** be given to children below 16 years old because of the possibility of Reye's syndrome. This is a rare condition that has been linked to the use of ASA in children and adolescents. It causes swelling in the liver and brain which can lead to permanent injuries.



When to seek medical help

The side effects of vaccines should resolve within a few days. Keep a closer watch on your children after they are vaccinated.

Seek medical help if:

- (1) Your child starts exhibiting serious symptoms (difficulty breathing, swelling of the face/throat, increased heart rate, severe rash all over the body, and seizures).
- (2) If post-vaccination symptoms persist for many days, without any sign of getting better.
- (3) If post-vaccination symptoms get worse after 24 hours. PP



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Kids age
6-12 years old

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Toothache
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of teething



Headache and
symptoms of cold
and flu



Fever after
vaccination



Kids age 6-12 years old

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5 Key Information to Look for on Food Labels

By **Dr Roseline Yap**, Nutritionist & Hon. Treasurer, Nutrition Society of Malaysia (NSM)



Food labels are important sources of nutrition information for us to make smarter food choices. Here are 5 items to look out for.

Quick info at a glance

Nutrition Information

Serving Size: 30g
Serving per package: 10

| Nutrients | Per 100g | Per serving (30g) |
|-------------------|----------|-------------------|
| Energy (kcal) | 380 | 114 |
| Carbohydrate (g) | 78.7 | 23.6 |
| Protein (g) | 7.8 | 2.3 |
| Fat (g) | 3.8 | 1.1 |
| Dietary fibre (g) | 4.1 | 1.2 |
| Vitamin C (mg) | 70.0 | 21.0 |
| Vitamin B1 (mg) | 1.6 | 0.5 |
| Vitamin B2 (mg) | 1.6 | 0.5 |
| Folic acid (ug) | 200.0 | 60.6 |
| Calcium (mg) | 720 | 216 |
| Iron (mg) | 14.0 | 4.2 |

Nutrition information panel

provides a quick snapshot of a product's key nutrients, presented as per 100 g/100 ml and per serving. Note: Nutrients MUST be presented in both formats.

When buying different brands of similar products, always make comparisons of the energy and nutrient content based on per 100 g/100 ml.

1

One serving (30g) contains



Energy icon shows the amount of energy (in kilo calories) in one serving. The percentage is based on an average adult's energy requirement.

2



Healthier choice logo

can be found on foods and beverages that meet certain nutrient criteria set by the Ministry of Health

and is considered to be "healthier" within the same food or beverage category. However, your buying decision should not be based solely on this logo; do check the nutrition information panel for details.

3

Ingredients: Maize, rice flour, whole grain wheat, sugar, wheat starch, glucose syrup, raising agent, palm oil, iodised salt, vitamin C, folic acid, iron & permitted colouring.

Ingredient list shows the ingredients contained in the food product. Ingredients are always listed in descending order of their weight, starting from the most to the least.

4

Nutrition claims

• Content claims

Description of nutrient levels (e.g. low in sugar, high in protein, source of Vitamin C).

• Comparative claims

Comparison of energy/ nutrient levels between similar products (e.g. lower fat, higher calcium).

• Function claim

Description of function of specific nutrients (e.g. calcium helps in bone formation).

Use a combination of these items to guide you in making healthier food choices.

5

For more information on **Healthy Nutrition and Tips to be Nutrition Savvy Shopper - Read Food Labels**, scan the QR code:



Healthy Breakfast: A Good Morning Habit

By **Dr Serene Tung**, Nutritionist & Member of Nutrition Society of Malaysia (NSM)



The way you start your day can determine the outcome of the whole day. A good morning routine can improve one's discipline, hygiene, productivity and focus. There are many good morning habits that should be nurtured in your kids, e.g. waking up early, making the bed, simple stretching, brushing their teeth. Having a nutritious breakfast is one of the key components of a good morning habit too.

Benefits of breakfast

Breakfast is not called the most important meal of the day without reason. Having breakfast replenishes energy levels after long hours of fasting during sleep. Since breakfast also contributes to our daily total nutrient intake, people who have breakfast are also more likely to meet daily recommended intakes of key nutrients like fibre, vitamins and minerals. Breakfast also helps prevent overeating during the next meal and enhances our concentration and performance in the morning.

The important thing is to **have a healthy nutritious breakfast**. You can help your children achieve this by emphasising **balance, moderation and variety (BMV)** when preparing breakfast. Remember to **opt for whole grains** which are more nutritious than refined grains. Don't forget to **include fruits and veggies** as well during breakfast to fulfil the recommended servings. **Have some proteins** too, e.g. from milk, cheese and egg, for a complete breakfast.

Easy & healthy breakfast ideas

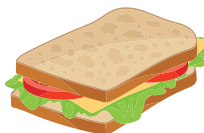
• Nutty fruity oatmeal:

Rolled or quick oats with milk, topped with mixed nuts and fruits.



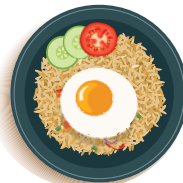
• Egg sandwich:

Scrambled eggs with tomatoes and onions between two slices of wholegrain bread.



• Omelette fried rice:

Fried brown rice and omelette with carrots and peas.



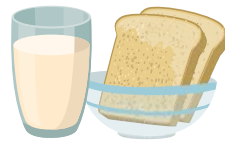
Quick breakfast tips

• Prepare early:

Spend some time at night to prepare breakfast in advance and save time in the morning. For example, you can pre-cut fruits or pre-cook rolled oats.



- **Reuse leftovers:** Dinner from last night can be reheated or repurposed for breakfast. For example, slice and reheat leftover grilled chicken and turn it into a grilled chicken sandwich.
- **Have it together:** One way to encourage your children to eat breakfast is by making it a family routine. Everyone should try to have breakfast together before going out for the day.
- **Keep it simple:** When everyone is in a rush, opt for ready-made yet nutritious breakfast. A breakfast with two slices of whole grain bread and a glass of milk is better than nothing.



To cultivate healthy habits in your children, you have to start from young. This includes the habit of having breakfast. As with all changes, start small and gradually, but remain consistent. Most importantly, you as parents have to be the role model and practise what you preach. PP

An educational collaboration with



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Teaching Children about Charity and Kindness

By **Dr Yong Junina Fadzil**, Consultant Paediatrician and Paediatric Cardiologist



Charity begins at home. That's how the saying goes. As such, charitable acts too, begin at home as children observe the adults around them on a daily basis. When considering charity and charitable acts, it is important to remember that one does not have to be rich to be charitable. For although charity is often associated with giving money, it is also the quality of being kind to others and not judging them in a severe way. Not being able to donate money does not mean one cannot still be charitable. This is the first message to teach our children.

How to instil charitable thoughts in our children?

The best way is to **lead by example**, for children learn through observation. Start with simple acts of kindness, like smiling and saying thank you to others. Instead of making fun of others in their presence, find for and talk about the good traits. Empathise rather than criticise.

All too often, we mock and demean without actually meaning to do so, and these habits are witnessed and repeated by our children.

Avoid categorising people based on their appearances, nationalities and occupations. Instead, **teach children that everyone is equal** and should be treated as such, irrespective as to how they look, dress or their level of education. Emphasise less on material wealth and more on kindness. While we need money to live, it is important that we not hinge everything on material wealth and measure success by how much one makes or owns.

The act of giving charity can also be taught from a very young age. While donating to beggars is frowned upon, we can contribute to various causes, many of which are seen from time to time in malls, etc. Take the time to stop by these booths so your child can hear about the causes these organisations champion.

Give generously to your staff and employees. I grew up watching my mother buy a pack of apples for her staff from time to time, as well as sewing frocks with smocking when they had babies, as gifts. In return, I also witnessed her patients help her weave *kelongsong ketupat* from the leaves she had taken to her clinic in the hope of weaving them in between patients. Imagine her surprise when she found that these ketupat cases were all woven by the end of her work day. Imagine too, the gratitude felt by her staff upon receiving the gifts.

These happened in the 70's and early 80's, yet they remain fresh in my mind, 40 years after her demise. That is the impact of my mother's charitable act on my impressionable child's mind. No lectures were needed. Just acts of kindness. And proof that what goes around comes around, in the nicest possible way. Our maids were also treated with respect and kindness. We weren't allowed to order them around. Every request had to be made politely and thanked.

An older child can be exposed to organisations like soup kitchens, which provide food to the homeless. Such exposures will enable them to reflect on their own circumstances and appreciate what they have. While volunteering, they will also learn to be mindful of their words and actions, thus teaching them humility. To avoid any untoward incidents, do brief them on the do's and don'ts before heading out to the soup kitchens.

In summary, charity and charitable acts can be taught from a very young age, simply by practicing them ourselves. Children learn through observation, and witnessing their parents engage in charity and charitable acts leave a long-lasting impact. PP

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Celebrity Obsession Among Teens

By **Dr N. Thiyagar**, Senior Consultant Paediatrician & Adolescent Medicine Specialist

Celebrity obsession is not a new thing. Teenagers have always been influenced by celebrities. More so today, when there are platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and TikTok that make it easier for them to follow the professional and personal lives of celebrity idols. As a parent, it is only natural that you will worry over these obsessions, which left unchecked can lead to numerous issues.

Is celebrity obsession normal?

Celebrity obsession among teens is usually a natural part of growing up. The teen years are when adolescents actively seek out role models for cues on how to look and act. Celebrities lead exciting lifestyles, are talented and good looking, and therefore, your child will naturally be attracted to these qualities.

It's important to remember that not all celebrity adoration is harmful. Celebrities can also be positive role models to inspire teens to overcome challenges and achieve their dreams. Footballer Cristiano Ronaldo, for example, inspires many young sportsmen to have a positive work ethic and desire for perfection in sport.

However, social media has altered the nature of celebrity obsession. Today, teens can communicate with their idols, and gain likes from their peers when they display their photos

and posts. If a teen is vulnerable and indulges in excessive celebrity worship, this can lead to a wide range of mental health issues.

What are the limits?

Parents should always be vigilant and look out for tell-tale signs that your kids are going overboard. If they have a few posters up on the wall or follow favourite celebrities on social media, that's okay. But you need to step in if you notice these red flags:

- Compulsive spending on idols or their merchandises, which can often put a dent in the wallet!
- Spending an inordinate amount of time on their idols, especially online
- Imitating their idols by getting tattoos, colouring their hair or putting on excessive makeup

When things get out of hand, these obsessions may interfere with your child's sleep, homework, social life and self-esteem. It's best to nip these types of behaviours in the bud.



What can parents do to help teens?

There are several ways you can help your child not fall prey to unhealthy obsessions:

- Help them find positive role models
- Don't belittle their feelings
- Be more involved in your teens' lives and their choices
- Show interest and support your teen when you can; for example, you can go for concert or football match together
- Talk about their favourite celebrities and sports stars – reinforce good behaviour, and share your own values

Parents, you need to be alert about your children's choices. The teenage years are so important as your children are formulating their own identities and building on their self-esteem. Always provide positive support and guide them as they discover and learn from the people around them, including celebrities. PP

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- WHO 2007. Protein and Amino Acid Requirements in Human Nutrition. Report of a Joint WHO/FAO/UNU Expert Consultation.

- World Health Organization. Technical Note. Geneva, 2012. - Michaelsen, K. F. et. al., 2009. Food and nutrition bulletin, 30(3_suppl3), S343-S404

- Sukrosa tidak ditambah semasa pemrosesan