

Community Safety

THIS MONTH IN THE GREAT BODY SHOP, WE WILL BE STUDYING COMMUNITIES. WE'LL TALK ABOUT CONFLICTS IN COMMUNITIES, AND SOME WAYS TO SOLVE THEM (COMPROMISE, DEBATE, DISCUSSION, ETC.) WE'LL ALSO TALK ABOUT GANGS AND VIOLENCE AND THE PROBLEMS THEY CAUSE IN A COMMUNITY.

Teach Children to Talk It Out

Disagreements between family members and friends are normal. However, children need to learn how to disagree without pushing, hitting or name-calling. We've talked about conflict resolution in THE GREAT BODY SHOP. These ideas will work in your home, too. Teach your children to remember these rules when they argue:

- ❖ Attack the problem, not the person.
- ❖ Say what you want calmly and clearly. Tell the truth.
- ❖ Listen to what the other person wants. Don't interrupt.
- ❖ Don't call the other person names.
- ❖ Try to solve the problem by compromising. If children try but cannot, suggest that they come to you for help.

Staying Out of Gangs

It's not too early to talk to your 9 or 10 year old about gangs and violence. It's common for gangs to have 10 year olds carry drugs or money or run errands for them.

Talk to your child about gangs, guns and violence. Don't allow your child to think that gangs are glamorous. Help your child learn to express feelings in a non-violent way.

Encourage your child to join a club or team or go to a community center where gangs are not allowed. Don't let your child have too much free time on his/her hands. Don't let your child "hang out" with gang members.

Tell your child never to go to "gang" parties, wear gang colors or take part in graffiti writing. Teach him/her never to hang out around graffiti marked walls. Kids should never hang around people or places associated with gangs or violence.

READ ALL ABOUT IT

With your child, read one of the following books. Talk about the conflicts in the story, and the way the characters handled it. Could they have solved the problem in a better way?

Ramona the Pest, by Beverly Cleary.

Secret of the Pascetti Warrior, by Dan Millman.

A book for you — *Peace In the Family*, a workbook of ideas and actions by Lois Dorn, Parthenon Books, NY.

Monday Today's Riddle

I am a mineral that makes the enamel on your teeth harder than it already is. I have been added to drinking water and toothpaste. What am I?
(epijonij)

Tuesday Today's Riddle

If one of your child's adult teeth is knocked out:
1. Put it in a glass of milk or water, or wrap it in a wet washcloth. Do not wash tooth!
2. Get to the dentist within a half hour.

Wednesday Today's Riddle

I am the hard, white coat of armor that covers your teeth. What am I?
(teureure)

Thursday Today's Riddle

A pediatric dentist is a dentist specially trained to work with children. You can find one in your area by consulting the American Dental Assoc. directory *(check your library)*.

Friday

Every snack your child eats can cause a 20 minute "acid attack." Try to limit snacks to fruit, cheese, and vegetables. Try to avoid "sticky" snacks.

Under stress? You may grind your teeth while sleeping! Signs to watch for: pain when chewing, headaches, a "click" when you open your jaw wide. Wearing a night guard can stop the problem.

Choose a "youth" toothbrush for your child. The smaller head makes it easier to reach back teeth. Look for one with soft bristles. Brushes with "hard" bristles actually wear enamel off your teeth.

Hidden sugars can hurt teeth, too. Check the label on foods like processed peanut butter, ketchup and salad dressings.

Chewing pens, pencils and even fingernails can crack a tooth's enamel. Some people have even worn a groove in their teeth over time.

Use a toothpaste with **fluoride**. The teeth will absorb the fluoride, which will harden the teeth's enamel. If there is no toothpaste available, dry brushing will help remove plaque.

Today's Riddle
I'm a bumpy back tooth. Some people even call me a masher. What's my name?
(teipou)

Today's Riddle
I'm a flat front tooth. My job is to help you bite off pieces of food. What's my name?
(tosicau)

Today's Riddle
Does your child always breathe out of his mouth, instead of his nose? Doing that can dry out teeth and gums. Check with your pediatrician to find out if the nose is blocked.

Make sure your child flosses regularly — it's the only way to get rid of between-teeth plaque. Try cinnamon or mint flavored floss. If your child's teeth are close together, choose a fine floss.

Learning from Many Cultures

We all have different ways of doing things and different ways of thinking. In THE GREAT BODY SHOP, we'll talk about ways that people in the community can try to understand one another. Why not try some of these ideas at home?

- ❖ Don't allow racial or ethnic jokes.
- ❖ At the library, look for books and stories on people from other cultures.
- ❖ Once in a while, make an ethnic meal. Talk about the country it comes from while you eat.
- ❖ Teach children to respect the religion, holidays and traditions of other people

THE DIGESTIVE SYSTEM

THIS MONTH IN THE GREAT BODY SHOP, YOUR CHILD WILL BE LEARNING ABOUT THE DIGESTIVE SYSTEM. WE'LL ALSO TALK ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF EATING A VARIETY OF FOODS EVERY DAY.

Food from Around the World

The food we eat often has roots in countries the world over. With your child, go through your refrigerator or kitchen cabinets. See how many foods you can find that are eaten in other countries. Can your child name some of your family's favorite foods (*spaghetti, burritos, egg rolls, etc.*) that were inspired by other cultures?

African Rice Bread

Have your child locate Liberia on a map of Africa. This bread recipe originated in that country. Save the recipe for a rainy day, then make it together.

Ingredients:

- 1 cup milk
- 2 eggs
- 1/2 cup vegetable oil
- 4 bananas, mashed
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 2 cups cream of rice cereal, dry
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 4 tsp. baking powder

Blend eggs, milk, oil and mashed bananas until smooth. Add sugar. Mix cream of rice, baking powder and salt together. Add to the banana mixture and blend. Pour batter into a well-greased loaf pan and bake at 350 degrees for one hour. The bread is done when a toothpick inserted in the middle comes out clean.

Food for Thought

There's no doubt about it: Children who eat a healthful breakfast are more alert and do better in school than children who leave the house with empty stomachs. Here are a couple quick breakfasts your child can make without help. Both can be eaten on the way to school.

Cheese Meltdowns

- 1-2 slices cheese
 - 1 pita pocket
- Put cheese in pita. Microwave on high until cheese melts. (Approx. 30 seconds.) Let cool one minute before eating.

Whacky Roll-Ups

- peanut butter
 - raisins or banana
 - 2 slices bread (preferably whole wheat)
- Spread bread with peanut butter. Sprinkle with raisins and roll up. Or, cut the banana in half lengthwise, put each half in center of bread, and roll.

COOKIE ALERT

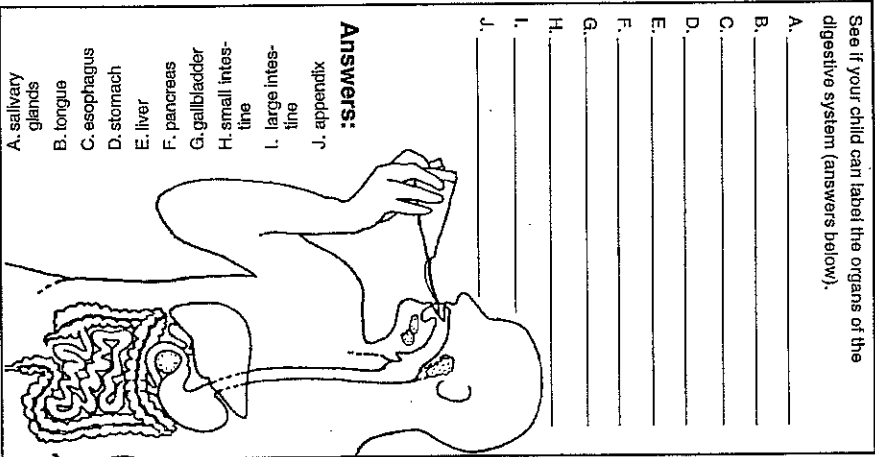
- COOKIES CAN VARY FROM 15% FAT TO OVER 60% FAT. THOSE WITH THE LOWEST FAT CONTENT ARE: GRAHAM CRACKERS, PIE-FILLED SANDWICH COOKIES, ANIMAL CRACKERS, MOLASSES AND GINGER SNAPS.
- CHECK LABELS TO BE SURE COOKIES CONTAIN VEGETABLE OIL INSTEAD OF SATURATED FAT. SATURATED FATS ARE LARD, PALM OR COCONUT OIL, BEEF FAT AND BUTTER.

See if your child can label the organs of the digestive system (answers below).

- A. _____
- B. _____
- C. _____
- D. _____
- E. _____
- F. _____
- G. _____
- H. _____
- I. _____
- J. _____

Answers:

- xipundab r
- anj
- setu ager 1
- anj
- setu llamw H
- jepppqitab G
- searand F
- ajiv E
- chamosts D
- snbdgose C
- enbun B
- spueif
- avrlava V



NO SMOKING

THIS MONTH IN THE GREAT BODY SHOP, YOUR CHILD WILL STUDY THE EFFECTS OF SMOKING. PLEASE REINFORCE THE TOPIC LEARNED IN SCHOOL BY DISCUSSING IT WITH YOUR CHILD AT HOME. THE LESSONS COVER:

- LESSON 1: How Smoking Harms The Body
- LESSON 2: Why Do People Smoke?
- LESSON 3: ADVERTISING AND OTHER INFLUENCES ON YOUR BEHAVIOR
- LESSON 4: SMOKING AND YOUR COMMUNITY

Making Healthy Decisions

Talk with your child about the health decisions we make every day. For example, you help your child learn about health when you:

- serve a balanced meal
- limit junk food
- insist he/she brush teeth and bathe
- insist he/she wash hands after using the bathroom

How do laws help us protect our health?

(Discuss the seat belt law in force in many states, required vaccinations, regulations about disposing of garbage, industrial waste, air pollution, etc.)

Ask why he/she thinks it is important that we each take responsibility for protecting our own health.

Scary Statistics

More than 6.4 million children living today will die prematurely because of a decision they will make as adolescents — the decision to smoke cigarettes.*

Currently, in the US over 4 million children under the age of 18 smoke cigarettes. Daily, more than 6,000 young people try a cigarette and nearly 3,000 become regular smokers.*

Early adolescence (age 11-15 years), or sixth through tenth grade, is the period when young people are most likely to try smoking for the first time.*

Talk to your children about the dangers of tobacco products. Parents play a key role in their child's decision not to smoke. If you use tobacco products, now is the perfect time for you to quit.

*US Surgeon General's Office 2002

Trying To Quit?

- Pick a date. Tell everyone you're kicking the habit. You'll need their support; besides, it's harder to give in to a cigarette if others are watching.
- Join a group. It's easier to quit with the support of others. Some groups are free.
- Hide cigarettes and ashtrays.
- Chew gum to keep your mouth occupied so you don't reach for food or a cigarette.
- Expect to feel headachy, cranky or even nauseous for several days. After all, you're battling an addiction.

Remember: Once you quit, much of the damage that smoking has done to your lungs will reverse itself. Within eight hours, carbon monoxide levels in your blood return to normal; within nine months, cilia begin to regrow in the lungs; within ten years, precancerous cells are replaced and your chance of getting lung cancer drops to that of a non-smoker.

Let's Talk Current Events

- With your child, go through the newspapers to find an article about smoking, such as: a lawsuit against tobacco companies; an article about smoking in the workplace; new findings about tobacco, etc. Discuss.
- Reinforce that second-hand smoke (other people's cigarette smoke) is harmful to non-smokers. That's why smoking is banned in many public places.

Read All About It

There are excellent pamphlets on smoking and chewing tobacco available from The American Cancer Society, The American Heart Association, and The American Lung Association. Call your local health department for more information. **NO Smoking**

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IT'S MY BODY

THIS MONTH IN THE GREAT BODY SHOP, WE WILL BE TALKING ABOUT PERSONAL SAFETY. THE LESSONS WILL HELP YOUR CHILD USE COMMON SENSE AND MAKE SMART DECISIONS TO AVOID DANGER. STUDENTS WILL ALSO LEARN WHAT TO DO IF SOMEONE TOUCHES THEM IN A WAY THAT MAKES THEM FEEL SCARED OR UNCOMFORTABLE. THE LESSONS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- LESSON 1: TAKING CARE OF YOUR BODY
- LESSON 2: CRITICAL THINKING TO THE RESCUE
- LESSON 3: IN TUNE WITH YOUR EMOTIONS
- LESSON 4: PREVENTION OF ABUSE

Latchkey Kids

Does your child come home to an empty house? According to one California study, children who are left alone for over 11 hours a week are twice as likely to experiment with drugs as those who are supervised. Such children are also more likely to be lonely, depressed and do poorly in school. Juggling child care and work is never easy, but there may be some child-care alternatives you've overlooked.

- Can your child go to a friend's house after school? You could baby-sit for the friend on weekends.
- Does your school, church, local Y or community center have an after-school program?
- Could you join with several other families and hire a caregiver for after-school hours?
- Is there a retired person in your neighborhood who could watch your child? You might pay him/her back by doing grocery shopping, mowing the lawn or doing other odd jobs around the neighbor's home. (Be sure, of course, that you know the person well enough to entrust with your child's care.)

Can you speak to your employer about the problem? Many companies are now offering flex time. Some allow employees to work at home, or offer money toward child care.

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FOR YOUR CHILD'S PROTECTION

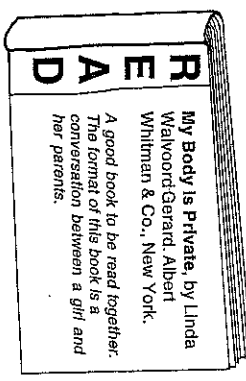
In Lesson IV, we'll talk about adults who want to hurt children, and some of the tricks they use. For example, an adult might try to befriend a child and buy him ice cream or a toy to gain trust. Students will learn never to go with a person they don't know. You can help to reinforce this material by talking about it at home. First of all, make sure your children know who is a "stranger". A person they see in your apartment building or in a store every day may be nice and friendly, but is still a stranger.

BE AWARE, HOWEVER, THAT MOST CHILDREN ARE NOT BURIED BY STRANGERS, BUT BY PEOPLE THEY KNOW AND TRUST. TEACH CHILDREN THAT IT'S OK TO SAY "NO" TO AN ADULT WHO IS DOING SOMETHING THAT FRIGHTENS THEM. TEACH YOUR CHILDREN THAT IT'S OK TO YELL IF THEY NEED HELP. TELL YOUR CHILDREN THAT THEY CAN ALWAYS GO TO YOU FOR HELP WITH A PROBLEM.

WHO'S SAFER?

The "typical" child abuser is not a stranger in an overcoat who hangs out in dark alleyways. According to the Children's Safety Project in New York, some of what we think is not always accurate.

- Myth:** The child is likely to be abused by a stranger.
- Truth:** The child is likely to be abused by someone he/she knows and trusts, such as a family member.
- Myth:** Most cases of abuse happen in isolated places.
- Truth:** Many cases of abuse happen on playgrounds, in school or at home.
- Myth:** Abusers often use violence.
- Truth:** Abusers are more likely to bribe, threaten or trick children into doing what the abuser wants.
- *The C.S.P. is a participatory member agency of the New York City Task Force Against Sexual Abuse.***



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BE COOL, KEEP CLEAN!

THIS MONTH IN THE GREAT BODY SHOP, YOUR CHILD WILL BE LEARNING ABOUT HYGIENE. WE ASK THAT YOU REINFORCE THE IMPORTANCE OF GOOD HYGIENE BY TALKING ABOUT IT AT HOME. THE LESSONS COVER:

- LESSON 1: HORRMONES AND BODY CHANGES
- LESSON 2: WHAT IS GOOD HYGIENE?
- LESSON 3: LUNESS PREVENTION AND GOOD HYGIENE
- LESSON 4: LOOKING GOOD, FEELING GREAT

Changing All The Time

In school, we will be talking about puberty, hormones, and personal cleanliness. If your child seems ready, you may wish to talk about body development, menstrual periods, reproduction and other aspects of puberty.

- It's normal for your child to be embarrassed when you talk about the changes that have started to happen — or will start to happen — to his/her body. Admitting your own embarrassment, and using humor, can help you both feel more comfortable.
- You might want to have a book or article on hand to help you when you talk. You may wish to ask your school district, doctor, health department or clergy about reading materials on puberty.
- Let your child know he/she can always come to you with questions about growing up.
- Tell your child how important it is to wash his/her private parts (genitals) to prevent odor and to reduce the chance of infection or irritation due to bacteria.

How To Beat "Sneaker Feet"
 Use a soapy washcloth to wash between each toe. Change your socks every day. Putting powder on your feet can help keep them smelling fresh, too.

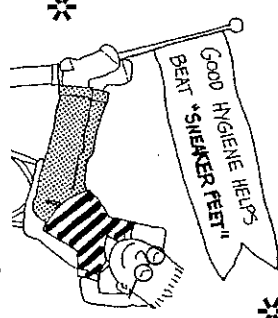
The Body Odor Issue

Teachers say that the #1 hygiene problem among middle-schoolers is body odor. Body odor occurs when bacteria mixes with sweat and oil on the skin. In THE GREAT BODY SHOP, your child will learn that daily baths or showers — with soap — are more important as they get older, because their bodies make more sweat and oil.

- Be sure you tell your child to put on clean underwear, socks and clothes after washing. (Many children will put the same clothes back on after a bath.)
- In school, your child will learn that good posture, clean hair and nails, and clean clothes are all part of good hygiene. (Now might be a good time to teach your children how to help with the laundry.)
- Talk about the things you do in your home to keep it clean and help prevent germs from spreading (i.e., washing the floors and counter tops, cleaning the bathroom, taking out the garbage, refrigerating and/or cooking foods, etc.)

Food Rules

Your children should learn that part of hygiene is making sure their environment is clean, too. They should know not to keep food in their bedrooms, or leave crumbs, dirty dishes, wrappers, etc. around the house. These things can attract mice, ants, flies and other bugs. Food that is left out in the open can breed bacteria, which can cause illness if anyone (pets included) eat it.



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THE DRUG AND ALCOHOL TEST

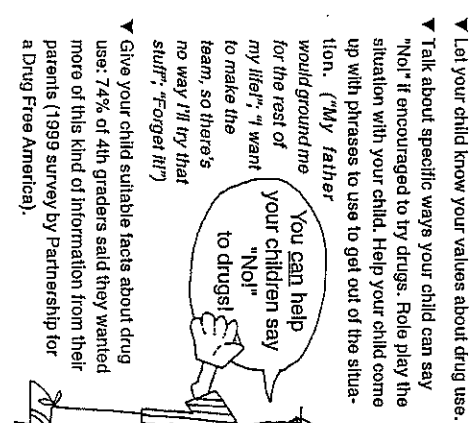
THIS MONTH IN THE GREAT BODY SHOP, YOUR CHILD WILL LEARN ABOUT DRUGS, ALCOHOL AND ADDICTIONS. DON'T THINK IT IS TOO EARLY TO DISCUSS DRUGS: A NATIONAL SURVEY OF FOURTH GRADERS FOUND THAT 35% OF THEM BELIEVE ALCOHOL IS A "BIG PROBLEM" AMONG THEIR PEERS. IT'S IMPORTANT TO TALK TO YOUR CHILD NOW, WHEN HE/SHE IS YOUNG ENOUGH TO ACCEPT PARENTAL GUIDANCE. THE LESSONS COVER:

LESSON 1: DRUG FREE AND ASSET STRONG
LESSON 2: DRUGS: WHAT THEY ARE AND WHAT THEY DO
LESSON 3: MAKING SMART DECISIONS
LESSON 4: HOW AND WHERE TO FIND HELP

Start Talking

You're driving down the street and see a billboard advertising liquor; an actor on TV pours himself a drink; your child comes home from a friend's house and complains that his clothes smell like smoke . . . these are all perfect times to begin talking about alcohol and drugs.

- Ask your child what he/she thinks about alcohol, cigarettes or other drugs. Why does he feel the way he does? Be sure to listen to what your child has to say, so that you know just what his/her concerns are.
- Let your child know your values about drug use.
- Talk about specific ways your child can say "No!" If encouraged to try drugs. Role play the situation with your child. Help your child come up with phrases to use to get out of the situation. ("My father would ground me for the rest of my life!", "I want to make the team, so there's no way I'll try that stuff", "Forget it!")



Accentuate The Positive

A strong sense of self esteem will make it easier for your child to say "No!" to risky or dangerous behaviors. You can help your child develop more confidence by getting him or her involved in meaningful activities.

- Encourage volunteer work. For example, your child might run errands or mow the lawn for an elderly neighbor, or take part in a neighborhood clean-up day.
- Enroll your child in an activity oriented group, such as the Scouts or a local church group, or encourage participation in sports.
- Give your child responsibilities at home, and always remember to praise a job well done.
- Ask your child for input and advice when establishing family rules.
- Tell your child — often — that you love and are proud of him or her. Be generous with hugs, kisses and other signs of love and approval.

DREAMS & PLANS

Talk to your child about his or her goals for the next few years. What hobbies, activities or sports would he like to pursue? Is there anything she would like to change about herself? Discuss how to accomplish these goals one step at a time.

Ask your child: If someone were to describe you, what words would you like that person to use?

Read All About It

What Kids Need to Succeed, by Peter Bensen, Judy Galbraith, Pamela Espeland. Free Spirit Publishing.

Not My Family: Sharing the Truth about Alcoholism, by Maxine B. Rosenberg. Simon and Schuster.

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ALL ABOUT HIV

THIS MONTH IN THE GREAT BODY SHOP, YOUR CHILD WILL BE STUDYING HIV. BECAUSE THE SUBJECT IS SO SENSITIVE, WE FEEL IT'S IMPORTANT THAT YOU BE ABLE TO DISCUSS HIV AND AIDS OPENLY WITH YOUR CHILD. YOUR OPENNESS NOW CAN BUILD THE FOUNDATION FOR COMMUNICATION LATER, WHEN YOUR CHILD REACHES ADOLESCENCE. THE LESSONS ARE:

LESSON 1: ALL ABOUT HIV
LESSON 2: TRANSMISSION OF HIV
LESSON 3: KNOW YOURSELF AND YOUR FRIENDS
LESSON 4: HIV AND THE COMMUNITY

Talking About HIV

- Ask your child to bring his or her GREAT BODY SHOP issue home when finished with it in school. That way, you can look at it together.
- Ask your child what he or she has learned about AIDS. Ask if he or she knows what HIV is (the virus that causes AIDS). Does your child understand what the immune system is? Can he or she list the major ways HIV can spread? Can your child tell you the connection between HIV and intravenous drug use?
- Ask your child if he or she can explain what body fluids are (body fluids are any liquid that your body makes). Remind your child that only some body fluids, such as blood, can pass HIV to someone else.

With your child, cross out all the ways in which HIV does not spread. (answers upside down)

mosquitoes	hugging or kissing
hypodermic needles	sex
blood	public bathrooms
water fountains	swimming pools

Answers:

spoon	water
swimming pool	pool
public bathroom	public bathroom
hugging or kissing	hugging or kissing
blood	blood
hypodermic needles	hypodermic needles
mosquitoes	mosquitoes

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It's Not Too Early

"Education about AIDS should start in early elementary school and at home so that children can grow up knowing the behavior to avoid . . . The threat of AIDS can provide an opportunity for parents to instill in their children their own moral and ethical standards."

C. Everett Koop, Former U.S. Surgeon General

The Puzzler's Challenge

After reading the issue, your child should be able to do this crossword puzzle (answers below).

- Across:
- Drug users can get HIV from sharing a _____.
 - Which blood cells does HIV destroy?
 - HIV is carried in a person's _____.
 - Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome is the full name for _____.
 - HIV prevents the body from fighting _____.
- Down:
- These help white blood cells fight germs.
 - The virus that causes AIDS is called _____.
 - If someone offers you drugs, your answer should be _____.

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YOUR INCREDIBLE HEARING MACHINE

THIS MONTH IN THE GREAT BODY SHOP, YOUR CHILD WILL BE LEARNING ABOUT THE EAR. THE LESSONS ARE:

- LESSON 1: SOUND AND THE EAR
- LESSON 2: TAKING CARE OF YOUR EARS
- LESSON 3: HEARING IMPAIRMENTS
- LESSON 4: SOUND AND THE ENVIRONMENT

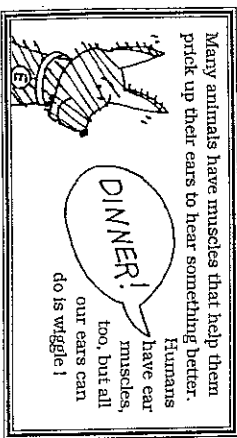
Washing, Warming

If the outer ear is dirty, use only a damp wash-cloth to clean it. The inside of the ear does not need to be cleaned. A cotton swab or other object poked into the ear can easily damage the delicate eardrum.

Earwax is a protective coating which traps dust and dirt and helps prevent the skin of the ear from becoming infected. Generally, the wax will dry up and flake out of the ear on its own. (The movement of the jaw while chewing or talking helps the *earwax flake off*. To feel this, gently put the tip of your pinky into the ear canal and move your jaw.)

Is That My Voice?

Have you ever heard a tape-recording of your voice and thought "Is that me? Is my voice really that high?" The reason for this is that you generally hear, or "feel," a great deal of your own voice transmitted through the bones of your face and head. Since bone is a very dense material, it transmits low frequency sound better. Therefore, your own voice sounds lower than it really is.



Humans have ear muscles, too, but all our ears can do is wiggle!

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MUSIC MONITORING

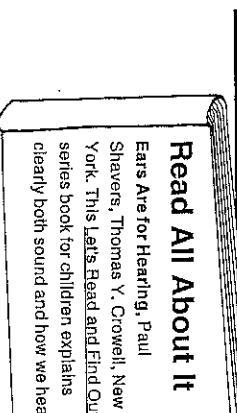
Parents would do well to be concerned over the volume of their children's radios, stereos or headphones. The American Academy of Pediatrics warns that loud noise can cause permanent hearing loss. The Academy is also studying the effects of rock music and lyrics on children. Some lyrics are extremely graphic, and some advocate violence, suicide, drug use and the degradation of women. As a parent, what can you do?

BE AWARE THAT ANY NOISE OVER 100 DECIBELS (about as loud as a power saw) can permanently damage ears. A typical rock concert is about 110 decibels. If your child goes to a concert, insist he/she wear ear plugs. You might be more successful in getting kids to turn down the volume by mentioning that even musicians warn about the dangers of too-loud music.

MAKE SURE THE MUSIC IN HEADPHONES isn't so loud that it drowns out conversation.

DISCUSS YOUR CHILD'S FAVORITE group/musicalian. Listen to the music, and read the lyrics often accompanying the recording. At least twenty major publishers have voluntarily agreed to print lyrics on the packaging. The Parents' Music Resource Center, founded by Tipper Gore (wife of former Vice President Al Gore), was one of the groups which pressured the music industry to label recordings.

WATCH MUSIC VIDEOS TOGETHER, and don't allow him/her to view anything that you don't feel is appropriate.



Read All About It
 Ears Are for Hearing. Paul Shewers, Thomas Y. Crowell, New York. This Let's Read and Find Out series book for children explains clearly both sound and how we hear.

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EXERCISE

THIS MONTH IN THE GREAT BODY SHOP, YOUR CHILD WILL LEARN ABOUT EXERCISE AND HOW IT BENEFITS THE BODY. WE URGE YOU TO REINFORCE THE MATERIAL BY DISCUSSING IT AT HOME. THE UNIT WILL BE DIVIDED INTO FOUR LESSONS:

- LESSON 1: TYPES OF EXERCISE
- LESSON 2: EXERCISE FOR THE WHOLE BODY
- LESSON 3: THE BENEFITS OF EXERCISE
- LESSON 4: ROUTINES FOR SAFE EXERCISE

Consider This

"Many people believe that children are naturally active and fit. Yet...the adult fitness boom has failed to trickle down to our children....Not long ago, it was widely believed that degenerative diseases (*heart disease, osteoporosis, high blood pressure, etc.*) begin in middle age. Now, we know that such afflictions have their roots in childhood. Participation in a regular exercise regimen is one of the best ways of lowering risk of degenerative disease."

(From the *National Children and Youth Fitness Study II*, U.S. Dept of Health and Human Services.)

- ▶ For your child's health, get him or her to engage in physical activity during the routine of their day. He or she should get some physical activity every single day.
- ▶ Encourage your child to walk to school or a friend's house, rather than being driven; to play in the backyard after dinner; to invite others over for a game of catch, etc. You might set up a volleyball net in the backyard, take your children ice-skating instead of to the movies, and assign active chores such as raking leaves and shovelling snow.
- ▶ Above all, limit TV time — it's the biggest factor in the trend toward sluggishness.
- ▶ Why not exercise as a family? Have your child join you for a brisk walk or a bike ride. Encouraging your child will help you get some exercise, too!

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CHARTING PROGRESS

Here's an idea: With your child, design a large poster with a blank square for each day of the month. Each day that your child exercises (for at least a half hour), note the activity in the square. Try lots of different activities.

Give your child an exercise-related reward if he or she completes the month with the minimum requirement of exercise (4-5 times each week). For example, you might buy him a new T-shirt, take her bowling, purchase a new baseball mitt or jump rope.

Before Bed Stretches

Set aside 10 minutes before bedtime to do some bending and stretching with your child. (Keep movements nice and slow, or you'll get the child revved up — just the opposite of what you want to do!)

1. Walk around the room on tiptoes. As you go, reach arms up to touch the sky; stretch arms out to the side; push them behind you and repeat.
2. Sit on the floor. Spread legs out to the side, bend at the waist, and slowly reach over toward your right foot. Hold for five seconds, then sit up straight. Slowly reach over toward the left foot, then hold for five seconds. Repeat once more.
3. Stand straight. Bend your right knee to lift your right foot to your buttocks. Grab the foot with your right hand. Hold 5 seconds. Make sure that knees point toward the floor. Lower leg, repeat with the left.

