

What Children Really Want

As a parent, you want to see your children happy, so you scrimp and save – maybe even go into debt – to provide your children with their latest desire. But you might be surprised at what your children want even more than the latest toy or gadget: your time and attention.

Of course, children look for brightly wrapped presents at Christmas or birthdays. But gifts alone won't last as long as the memories you'll make by spending loving, quality time with your children. Consider giving your family members the "present" of your presence.

- Enjoy free activities, such as driving around and looking at holiday decorations or going window-shopping.
- Bundle up and spend 30 minutes walking in the snow or rain.
- Sip hot cider while you read stories to each other.
- Give each child a coupon redeemable for 15 minutes of your undivided attention.



- Sing holiday songs.
- Bake bread or holiday treats together.

If you have some money set aside for gifts, look for items that will encourage future interaction: table games, puzzles, a ball, books, and rubber boots for stomping in puddles together.

Make the most of the opportunity you have to interact positively with your children. They might not remember the year you gave them a bike, but they'll remember you teaching them to ride it. When you're interested in what your children enjoy – and you do it with them – you create happy times for your children to remember.

University of Delaware. 2010.

Play Safely in a Winter Wonderland



In the United States alone, winter sports accidents are responsible for almost 20,000 traumatic brain injuries each year. That doesn't even include other types of injuries, such as broken bones, sprains, lacerations, and frostbite. Here's how you can ski, snowboard, snowshoe, sled, and ice skate safely:

www.wellsources.info/wn/snow-sports.pdf

What Can You Do to Combat Diabetes?

As many as 1 in 3 U.S. adults could have diabetes by 2050 if current trends continue. For a lifetime of health, do all that you can to prevent diabetes from occurring. According to the Harvard School of Public Health, taking these simple steps can lower your risk of type 2 diabetes:

- **Achieve and maintain a healthy weight.** Excess body weight is the major cause of type 2 diabetes. (Excess weight increases the body's resistance to insulin.) If you lose even 10-15 pounds, you can significantly cut your risk of diabetes.
- **Get regular physical activity.** Exercise helps the body use insulin more effectively, which lowers your risk of type 2 diabetes. Aim for 30-60 minutes of moderate activity, such as brisk walking, most days of the week, preferably daily.
- **Be smoke free.** Smoking increases your risk of developing type 2 diabetes – by as much

as 92% for men and nearly double the risk for women. One study found that nonsmokers regularly exposed to secondhand smoke are also at increased risk.

- **Choose healthy fats.** Eating saturated (i.e., animal) fat and trans fat increases your risk for diabetes. Instead, read food labels and choose healthy fats, such as vegetable oils (e.g., canola, olive, and soy) and trans fat-free margarines, as well as nuts and trans fat-free baked goods.

- **Choose unrefined carbohydrates** that are high in fiber and have a low glycemic index (GI). Low GI foods are carbohydrates that are absorbed slowly, which helps keep blood sugar levels low. Examples of low GI foods include whole grains, most vegetables (except potatoes), whole fruits, legumes, nuts, milk, and soy milk.

Harvard School of Public Health. 2010. BMJ. 332(7549):1064-1069.



Develop your game plan to prevent type 2 diabetes:

<http://ndep.nih.gov/publications/PublicationDetail.aspx?PubId=71>



Is Your Student Safe?

In a recent study of more than 43,000 high school students, half of them admit they bullied someone in the past year, and nearly half say they were bullied, teased, or taunted in a way that seriously upset them in the past year.

"If the saying, 'sticks and stones will break my bones but names will never harm me' was ever true, it certainly is not so today," says Michael Josephson, founder and president of the Josephson Institute of Ethics. "Insults, name calling, relentless teasing, and malicious gossip often inflict deep and enduring pain. The Internet has intensified the injury. What's posted on the Internet is permanent, and it spreads like a virus."

Children who bully other children appear to be at risk for engaging in more serious violent behaviors. More than half admit that within the past year they hit a person because they were angry.

Teach your children they are not helpless. If they are bullied, they should tell an adult, and keep telling adults until something is done.

Encourage them to also keep a diary of what's happening to them, and under what circumstances, in case proof is needed down the road. Here are some other tips to help your child deal with bullying:

- Express confidence in your children's ability to solve problems.
- Reinforce a positive, yet accurate, self-opinion of your children.
- Encourage them to "hang out" with people who are supportive, not hurtful.
- Teach them ways to diffuse a tense situation (e.g., a joke or humorous comment).

Though difficult, it's possible for your child to disregard and not respond to hurtful comments that are untrue. If your child's physical safety is in danger, or he or she has been unreasonably psychologically or socially harmed, remove your child from the situation – even if that means a transfer to another school or moving to a different neighborhood.

Josephson Institute of Ethics. 2010.

Is Your Child a Bully?

Three online surveys can help you determine if your child is being bullied, if your child is a bully, and if you are doing all you can to prevent bullying.

CharacterCounts.org/bully-quiz

Stop Worrying About Cancer ... and Do Something!

Nearly 4 in 5 cancers are diagnosed after age 55. But regardless of your age, you can take steps to help lower your cancer risk. Here's how:

- **Maintain a healthy weight** by choosing lower calorie foods and balancing your calorie intake with physical activity. Excess fat weight is responsible for an estimated 14-20% of all cancers.
- **Adopt a physically active lifestyle.** Aim for at least 30 minutes of moderate to vigorous activity 5 days a week. For even better cancer prevention, be active 45-60 minutes daily. Regular activity helps you maintain a healthy weight and keep blood sugar and insulin levels lower – all of which help reduce cancer risk.
- **Choose whole grains** in place of processed grains (e.g., white bread, cakes, and refined cereals). The extra fiber in whole grains increases bowel health and appears to reduce the risk of colorectal cancer.



- **Eat a plant-based diet.** Fruits and vegetables are loaded with vitamins, minerals, antioxidants, and other substances that protect the body against cancer. Foods that are most closely linked to cancer prevention include: leafy greens, citrus, tomatoes, berries, melons, onions, garlic, and cabbage-family vegetables.
- **Eat processed and red meats sparingly.** These foods are high in saturated fat and are linked to increased risk of colorectal, prostate, and breast cancers.
- **Avoid alcoholic beverages.** Alcohol increases the risk for breast cancer (even as few as 3 drinks per week), cancer of the mouth, throat cancer, and liver cancer.

- **Don't smoke.** Smoking is responsible for 30% of all cancers and 87% of all lung cancers.

Seminars in Oncology. June 2010. Nutrition and Cancer. May 2010. American Institute for Cancer Research. Oct. 2010. American Journal of Clinical Nutrition. 85(5):1353-1360.

ASK THE WELLNESS DOCTOR

Q: I feel stressed during the holidays and at times unable to cope. I need help!

A: Go to www.wellsource.info/wn/ask-holiday-stress.pdf to read the answer from Don Hall, DrPH, CHES.

To ask your question, email: paulaw@wellsource.com, subject line: Ask the Wellness Doctor. Emails with any other subject line will be directed to the spam folder.

Health Challenge: "Protect Yourself from Infectious Diseases" available at: www.wellsource.info/wn/HC-Germs.pdf. Using a hand sanitizer can reduce the spread of germs, as can washing your hands well and often.