HEALTH AND SAFETY NEWS FROM THE PEDIATRIC EXPERTS AT CHILDREN’S MERCY HOSPITALS AND CLINICS

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**HouseCall**

**Daytime Wetting Troubles and Your Child**

**Safe Sleep Tips for Your Baby**

**Question:** My daughter has been potty trained but seems to be wetting herself during the day at preschool. Any ideas on why she’s wetting herself during the day?

**Answer:** Daytime wetting in a child who previously had daytime urinary control is not unusual in preschool or kindergarten children. Commonly the problem lasts a few weeks and then clears up. It may be a result of some anxiety your daughter is feeling about school. The following are also possible causes of the new daytime wetting:

1. Lack of free access to the bathroom when the urge to go appears
2. Ignoring the urge to urinate because of a preoccupation with play or participation in school activities
3. A reluctance to use the toilet away from home
4. Exposure to a new food or drink, especially one that contains caffeine, such as chocolate or cola
5. The onset of a urinary tract infection, which would be unlikely in this case since your daughter has a normal voiding pattern at home.

You can do several things to help address the problem. Elimination of caffeinated drinks—tea, coffee, chocolate, cola, or diet drinks; drinks with carbonation—soda or flavored waters; and citrus juices—orange, lemon, grapefruit, or tomato, will help. Encourage your daughter to drink water, cranberry juice, apple juice, milk, nectars, and juice without citrus instead. If the problem doesn’t clear up after several weeks, consult your doctor.

**Question:** I just had a baby and would like some tips on how to keep him safe during bedtime.

**Answer:** Keeping your infant safe in bed is as simple as A-B-C:

- **A for Air Quality.** Smoking in the house puts your baby at risk for sudden infant death syndrome, or SIDS. If you smoke, go outside.
- **B for Back to Sleep.** To reduce the risk of SIDS, healthy infants should be placed on their backs to sleep, not their stomachs. Laying infants on their sides is also an option, but it is not as safe as laying them on their backs.
- **C for Crib.** Your baby should sleep on a firm mattress that fits snugly in the crib. The crib slats should be spaced no more than 2 3/8 inches apart so a child’s head cannot become trapped between them. Also, don’t put pillows, stuffed toys, or heavy covers in the crib. These can block a baby’s nose and mouth. The use of a crib or bassinet is recommended as opposed to having a baby sleep with his parents because of increased incidence of SIDS in co-sleeping babies.

Finally, be sure to dress your baby in sleepwear labeled “flame-retardant” and to follow cleaning instructions to maintain flame resistance.

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Do you have a question for the pediatric experts at Children’s Mercy Hospitals and Clinics? Submit your question by sending an e-mail to thassen@cmh.edu or writing the editor: Telisa Hassen, Community Relations, Children’s Mercy Hospitals and Clinics, 2401 Gillham Road, Kansas City, MO 64108. We will answer as many inquiries as possible.
Early exposure to pets in infancy may protect against allergies and asthma later in life. But some experts think the opposite. Parents who want a pet for their child can first look for answers in their own family.

Allergies Tend to Run in Families
An allergy develops when the immune system overreacts to a normally harmless substance, or allergen. Common allergens are pollen or dried animal skin flakes, called dander. If a mom or dad has any type of allergies, there’s a 25 percent chance their child will develop a reaction to some substances. And a child who already has established allergies will likely develop one for animals.

If there is a strong family history of allergies, don’t adopt a furry pet until you can be certain your child is not allergic. If you already have a pet, monitor your child carefully.

Common signs of an allergic reaction include lasting cold-like symptoms, such as sneezing, itchy eyes, coughing, and wheezing. Skin reactions—such as hives and rashes—also are typical responses.

Your doctor can perform a thorough medical history, as well as tests, to determine if your child has allergies to pets.

Pet Fur Not to Blame
Furry pets, such as cats and dogs, are among the most common sources of allergies for kids. A protein found in the animals’ saliva, dander, and urine—not the fur—is to blame. Contrary to popular belief, studies show there are no breeds of dogs that are less allergenic than others. However, cats cause more reactions in children than dogs.

Allergies are a primary trigger for asthma, a condition that causes breathing difficulties in children. Finding out and reducing exposure to these triggers is important in controlling asthma.

Shampooing and brushing your pet regularly can help reduce dander.

The Environmental Assessment program at Children’s Mercy, the first in the region and a national model, goes beyond treatment to improve lifestyle by identifying asthma and allergic causes and triggers. To find out more about our Allergy/Asthma services, call (816) 234-3097.
Sports injuries force many children and adolescents to take time off from their game. The good news: You can follow some simple steps below to help ensure your young athlete’s safety.

**Balls. Bats. Bruises.** Sports injuries are common in young athletes. But the physical demands, equipment, and skills needed for each sport are different. It’s important to know what to look out for in each sport to protect against injury. The following tips can help you and your children get into a game plan of safety.

### Soccer
- Wear shin guards for every practice and every game.
- Choose shoes with molded cleats or ribbed soles.
- Ask your child’s doctor and coach whether your child can safely “head” the ball. Heading correctly can prevent head and neck injury.
- Make sure to use equipment that lowers injury risk, such as synthetic waterproof balls, anchored goals, and padded goalposts.

### Baseball/Softball
- Pitchers should throw only six innings per week.
- Catchers should wear helmets, masks, and chest-and-neck protectors.
- Children who are batting need to wear helmets.
- Safe equipment includes breakaway bases and softer balls.

### Volleyball
- Use knee pads, and wear lightweight shoes with strong support for ankles and arches.
- “Call” the ball to reduce collisions.
- To prevent overturning the net, never grab it or hang on to the supports.
- Any wires that hold up the net should be covered with soft material.
- Before playing, check outside courts for glass or other sharp objects.

### When Injuries Happen
No matter what the sport, some of the most common injuries are sprains, strains, or bruises. The best treatment is easy to remember: “PRICE.” Take these steps as soon as possible:
- Protect the injured area.
- Rest the injured area for 48 hours.
- Ice the injured area, 20 minutes every three to four hours for the first 48 hours, with a cold pack or ice bag.
- Compress an injured ankle, knee, or wrist with an elastic wrap.
- Elevate the injured area above the heart.

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If your child has an obvious fracture, a dislocated joint, unrelieved swelling or severe, continuing pain, contact your child’s doctor immediately. Visit our Web site at [www.childrens-mercy.org](http://www.childrens-mercy.org) for more information.
Being a parent is the most important job you’ll ever have—but it doesn’t come with a manual! That’s why Children’s Mercy Hospitals and Clinics, with support from Kohl’s Department Stores, has created Healthy Kids University—a variety of classes and presentations for both parents and children to help kids be safer and healthier.

Helpful Classes!
Sign up to attend one or more of these helpful classes. Pre-registration is required and space is limited, so call (816) 234-3748 today to register!

- **CPR for Family and Friends**
  April 9 and June 11, 9 a.m. to noon
  Children’s Mercy Hospital
  $20 per person

- **Safe Sitter**
  June 28, 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
  Children’s Mercy Hospital
  $15 per person

- **Growing Up Girls**
  April 25 and June 8, 6 to 8:30 p.m.
  Children’s Mercy Hospital
  $15 per family

- **Get Healthy with The Body Shop**
  • **The Body Shop for Parents**
    Mondays, April 4 to May 9
    Children’s Mercy Hospital
    $50 per person
  The Body Shop is a fun and energetic healthy lifestyles and weight management program, taught by Children’s Mercy staff. It focuses on healthy habits for the whole family with healthy eating, physical activity, and positive family dynamics. We offer programs just for parents, as well as programs for parents and children—ages 8 to 16—together.
  
  Call the Nutrition department at Children’s Mercy Hospital at (816) 234-3468 to find out more.

- **We’ll Bring a Presentation to You**
  Call to request one of these programs to be offered at your school, church, business, or scout troop. If you have a group of at least eight adults or children interested in one of these topics, we will bring our Healthy Kids University presentation to you:
  • Growing Up Girls
  • Safe Sitter
  • Growing Up Boys
  • Stressbusters
  • Exercise and Nutrition Go Hand in Hand
  • Parenting 101
  • Parenting Beyond Infancy
  • First Aid/Safety
  • Hand Washing
  • House of Poison
  • Hearing and Speech presentations
  
  Call (816) 234-3748 for more details and to schedule any of these presentations for your group.

Healthy Kids University is presented by Children’s Mercy Hospitals and Clinics, thanks to a generous grant from Kohl’s Department Stores. Stop by your nearest Kohl’s at any time to pick up the most recent Healthy Kids University information and calendar!
Birthmarks: A Cause for Concern?

Many babies are born with birthmarks or develop them soon after birth. While most don’t require treatment, some birthmarks do call for medical attention because they may cause health problems or can be disfiguring.

One common type of birthmark affects the skin’s color, or pigment, cells. Pigmented birthmarks include moles, light tan “café-au-lait spots,” and bluish-colored Mongolian spots.

Doctors will want to examine pigmented birthmarks, but usually they aren’t treated. However, parents need to carefully watch any moles a child is born with. Such moles—particularly if large—are more likely to become cancerous than those that appear later in life. When it comes to moles, be sure to report the following to your doctor:

- Any changes in size or color
- Blistering
- Bleeding
- Itching

Another common type of birthmark involves blood vessels growing together. These vascular birthmarks can develop either before or shortly after birth. Doctors aren’t sure what causes the birthmarks, which are usually painless and harmless but may require treatment. Vascular birthmarks include:

- **Salmon patches**—also called stork bites. These small, pink, flat spots are extremely common and may affect 30 to 50 percent of newborns. Frequently found on the head, face, or back of the neck, salmon patches typically fade within a few months.

- **Strawberry hemangiomas.** Characteristically a bright red, raised, rough-textured spot, these birthmarks may start out white or pale and turn red later. Generally found on the head or neck, they are more common in girls. This type of hemangioma, which only involves the skin surface, usually disappears before age 9.

- **Cavernous hemangiomas.** These birthmarks affect deeper layers of skin or even internal organs. They generally are more prominent, with bluish-red color. Doctors sometimes use laser surgery or steroid medication to reduce the size of the hemangioma if it interferes with vision, breathing, eating, or another vital function. Such birthmarks also require treatment if they bleed, ulcerate, or become infected.

- **Port-wine stains (PWS).** This type of birthmark gets its name because it turns an area of the outer layer of skin maroon or dark red. These birthmarks are very rare and occur most often on the face. While the PWS may start out flat and pink, the color typically deepens and the mark grows with the child. PWS generally are not harmful to health but can cause emotional distress. Early treatment with lasers can lighten the mark and limit its growth.

Need A Dermatologist?
Children’s Mercy offers the services of the only board-certified pediatric dermatologists in the region, providing care for children with a wide range of congenital and acquired skin, nail, and hair disorders. To find out more, contact the section of Dermatology at (816) 234-3924.

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Taking Care of Your Little One’s
Tummy Troubles

Does your little one have an upset stomach? Nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea are usually symptoms of a viral illness other than influenza, or the “flu.” As parents, we believe we must take action to rid our children of these miserable symptoms and grab one of the remedies we see advertised on TV. However, be careful—a child is not a small adult and should not be medicated like one.

A virus causing these tummy symptoms frequently starts out causing nausea or cramping. It may be tempting, but do not use products whose main ingredient is Bismol Subsalicylate, which is a relative of aspirin. Due to the risk of Reye’s syndrome, aspirin products should never be given to children younger than the age of 18 unless directed by a doctor. Conservative care is best:

- Give bed rest and clear liquids only.
- If vomiting starts, hold liquids until the child has gone two hours without vomiting. Then begin giving small frequent sips of clear liquid.
- Advance to a bland, low-fat diet after taking liquids well for eight hours.
- If diarrhea starts, it is treated in the same way as vomiting: plenty of liquids—go easy on juice—and a bland, starchy diet. Again, avoid any products, such as Kaopectate or Pepto Bismol, that contain Bismol Subsalicylate.

Call your doctor or nurse information line if your child vomits for more than 24 hours, has diarrhea more than two weeks, has a high fever or severe pain, or you see blood in the vomit or stools. Your child is adequately hydrated if she is making urine at least every 12 hours, and the inside of her mouth is wet—not sticky.

“Avoid any products, such as Kaopectate or Pepto Bismol, that contain Bismol Subsalicylate.”

Relating to Teen-Age Daughters: Tips for Dads
What’s a dad to do when his “little girl” is suddenly a teenager? Following are some ideas on how dads can keep the lines of communication open and relate with their daughters during the teen years.

- Communicate on an emotional level. Feelings are usually more important than “just the facts.” Try to put yourself in your daughter’s shoes to determine how she feels.
- Be a sensitive listener.
- Show approval and affection.
- Verbalize to your daughter what she means to you.
- Help your daughter build self-esteem.
- Learn about your daughter’s world and partake!

Important Rules for Teen Drivers
Has your teen driven for at least 12 months with no crashes or tickets? If not, experts say you should enforce these rules:

- At night, drive with a licensed adult driver.
- During the day, don’t take more than one non-family member in the car.

www.childrens-mercy.org
Motivating Your Little Couch Potatoes

Children are spending more of their leisure time sitting in front of a television or computer. As a result, more children today are less fit or weigh more than they used to.

Exercise helps children control their weight, strengthen bones, and reduce their heart risks later in life. But even if your child has gym class at school, it may not be enough.

Children need at least 30 minutes of moderate activity on most days of the week. The time can be broken into shorter periods during the day and still be effective. Here are some other tips to get kids moving:

● Limit TV time. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends no more than one to two hours of quality television and videos a day for older children, and no screen time at all for children younger than 2 years.

● Model good behavior. Look at your own lifestyle. Are you getting enough exercise? One study found that children whose parents were not active were more likely to be inactive themselves. Plan family outings that involve exercise.

● Play! Play! Buy toys that make kids move, such as sports equipment and active games. Or simply take a trip to the local playground.

The Body Shop!
To find out more about classes and programs we offer, like The Body Shop, see page 5 and visit our Web site at www.childrens-mercy.org to find out all that Healthy Kids University has to offer!