

Ask The Professionals

Ask Questions. Get Answers. "Ask the Professionals"

E-mail your questions to: features@independentfreepress.com

H **Halton Hills Speech Centre**
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Karen MacKenzie-Stepner

Q: My daughter makes the /s/ sound with her tongue sticking out. It sounded cute when she was younger but now that she is six it has become more obvious. How do we correct it?

A: From what you have described, your daughter may have what is typically called a frontal lisp. A frontal lisp is produced when the tongue is placed between the teeth during the production of the /s/ sound. The /s/ sound is usually produced with the teeth together, lips in a smile position and the tongue tip placed behind the bottom teeth. Some suggestions that may be helpful are: 1) point out to your daughter how you make the /s/ sound; 2) use a mirror and practice making just the /s/ sound with teeth together; 3) after your daughter can make the /s/ sound alone, practice making the /s/ sound using vowel sounds; and 4) start working on words that start with /s/. A Speech-Language Pathologist can help with the development of a program specifically geared for your daughter. Contact our Centre for more information.

GEORGETOWN PHYSICAL AND SPORTS THERAPY CLINIC
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Marta Masley
 B.Sc.(PT), M.C.P.A.

Q: My 12 year old child has been complaining of back pain ever since school started this fall. I'm wondering if she is carrying her backpack incorrectly?

A: Children that carry backpacks incorrectly, or that carry the wrong type of backpack may develop bad posture, muscle tension and back pain. This can even progress to an unhealthy back as an adult.

First of all, make sure that your child is utilizing both shoulder straps, not just one - which seems to be the "fad" lately. The straps should have thicker padding as not to dig into the shoulder muscles and collarbone.

Secondly, avoid backpacks that only have one large compartment. This will cause all the weight to drop to the bottom and press into the lower back. This, with the pull of the straps on the shoulders, will cause your child to lean back and hyperextend the lower back. Subsequently, a muscle strain will develop.

Make sure that your child is not carrying unnecessary items to school. Heavier items should be placed closer to the top of the pack, with lighter items (such as sweaters etc.) in the bottom. Lighter items can also be placed in the pockets and smaller compartments.

A good rule of thumb with respect to how heavy a back pack should be: before puberty, children should not carry more than 10% of their weight, and after puberty they can carry up to 20%. An ideal backpack will also have padding along the spine.

Since children spend years taking their backpacks to and from school, it is possible that even young children can develop postural problems, chronic tightness and tension. Rather than treating the problems afterwards, it is best if they can be prevented.

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Shari White
 Education Director

Q: I have heard that noisy distractions are bad for my son when he is trying to study, is this true?

A: In a word, YES! Let's take a look at two examples:

Scenario A:

* A student sits on the couch in front of the TV, which is on. There is a cell phone open on the coffee table. The student also has iPod ear buds nestled in her lobes, a book propped open on her knees, which are bobbing to a bass beat, a vacant stare in her eye.

Scenario B:

* A student sits at a desk. The room is quiet and well lit. There is little distraction—no TV, no computer, no cell phone. Books are open on a desk and student B is focused on his work.

Clearly, student A's concentration is less than focused on the task at hand, but the increased decibels from the TV, the iPod, and the cell phone may be doing more to increase stress levels than the upcoming test!

A study from the World Health Organization shows that excessive noise is linked to health problems. Physiological changes occur in the body when loud noise is present in the environment that a person may not even be aware of—stress hormones increase, sleep patterns can be disrupted, and ear problems such as tinnitus can develop—all from even small increases in the background noise level.

Attention all students who study like the student in scenario A: Turn down the volume. Take a deep breath. Reduce your stress. Study, and do it quietly, with little to no distractions—your health and your memory will thank you.

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Joy Thornton, B.Sc.Pharm.
 Pharmacist/Owner

Q: My doctor says I have asthma. What is asthma and why do I need 2 different puffers?

A: Asthma is inflammation or swelling of the breathing tubes (bronchioles) of the lungs. Because of inflammation, the bronchioles are extra sensitive and are easily narrowed by certain asthma triggers. This makes it more difficult for air to enter and leave your lungs. As a result, you may experience asthma symptoms. Common symptoms include cough, wheezing, shortness of breath and chest tightness.

The two basic types of inhaled medications used to treat asthma are "controller" and "reliever" medications.

Controller medications are used regularly as maintenance therapy to reduce the frequency and severity of asthma symptoms. They do this by reducing inflammation in the airways.

With proper use of these medications you should be able to exercise, sleep through the night without waking due to asthma and have only minimal need for your reliever medication. Inhaled corticosteroids are the main medications for controlling asthma. These include budesonide (Pulmicort), fluticasone (Flovent) and beclomethasone (Qvar). These medications are usually taken twice daily. People sometimes associate the word corticosteroid with body building steroids that are used by some athletes. Inhaled corticosteroids used for asthma do not have this activity. They are considered safe and are generally free of side effects when used at recommended doses.

Reliever medications are used "as needed" for relief of (or rescue from) asthma symptoms. These medications relax the muscles surrounding the airways and make it easier for air to flow in and out of your lungs. The reliever may also be used before exposure to a trigger (such as cold air or exercise) to prevent tightening of the airways. The term bronchodilator is often used to describe these drugs because relievers dilate (open up) bronchioles (the breathing tubes). Everyone with asthma should have a reliever medication available at all times to provide rescue if sudden symptoms occur. When inhaled into your lungs, relief occurs within 5 minutes. Common reliever inhalers include salbutamol (Ventolin, Airomir) and terbutaline (Bricanyl). When used as needed they cause few side effects. With more frequent use a person may experience shaking, increased heart rate and restlessness.

It is tempting to use your reliever medication often because it works so well. However, frequent use of a reliever medication (more than 3 times in a week) is a sign that asthma is not well controlled. If you find you are using your reliever inhaler more frequently you should check with your doctor to see if you need to use or increase your dose of controller medication.

Do you have more questions about asthma and the medications used to treat it? Why not come in and speak to your Shoppers Drug Mart Pharmacist!

Elayne Tanner & Associates Inc.
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Elayne M. Tanner

Q: I know that everyone feels nervous sometimes but when I have to go out to any social or work related event I get so anxious and fearful that now I prefer to stay home.

A: When your anxiety is this extreme, you may have what is known as social anxiety disorder. Social anxiety disorder leaves a person feeling intense fear of being in situations where you don't know people or feel judged. You may fear being embarrassed or noticed and humiliated. You may find yourself shaking, blushing, sweating, feeling nauseous, confused, tense and clammy. These are just some of the symptoms. Some people think that social anxiety disorder is a brain chemical, biological issue while others think it is a learned behaviour. Although no one is sure, there is research that suggests women get it more than men; you are more likely to have this disorder if someone in your family had it and if you suffered negative experiences such as bullying as a child. The biggest problem about this disorder is that it causes you to limit your life more and more until you are afraid to go out at all. This of course, can ruin your life, your schooling and your career.

The one thing that researchers are certain about regarding social anxiety disorder is that it responds to a combination of medication and cognitive behaviour therapy. The best results seem to be when these two are used together. Cognitive behaviour therapy states that your own thoughts, and not the situation, determine how you behave and will teach you to change the way you think so that you can function in a way that is satisfying for you and does not keep you confined to your home.

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PROFESSIONALS WANTED
 to inform our readers & answer their questions
THE INDEPENDENT & FREE PRESS
 Contact Amy Sykes to find out about our booking specials
 905-873-0301, ext. 237
features@independentfreepress.com

Hungry? Upcoming community dinners

Ham dinner: St. John's Anglican Church in Stewarttown, corner of Trafalgar Rd. and 15 Sideroad, hosts a ham dinner on Friday, Sept. 21, 6 p.m. Call 905-877-7563 for tickets: adults \$11, children, \$5.

Pig Roast: St. Andrew's United Church, 89 Mountainview Rd. S. is holding a Pig Roast on Saturday, Sept. 29, 5-7 p.m. Come and join us for a great dinner of roast pig or beef, potatoes, salad, and desserts. Adults \$15 and children under 12 are \$5 each. Call 905-877-4482 to reserve your tickets.

Turkey Dinner: will be held at Limehouse Presbyterian Church on Saturday, Sept. 29. Sittings at 5:15 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. Takeout available at 5:30 p.m. Tickets, adults \$12 and children, ages 6-12, \$6 and under age five, free. For tickets: Judy Burt, 905-877-2032 or Pam Payne, 519-853-0347.

Chicken Barbecue: hosted by Churchill Community Church on Saturday, Sept. 29, 5-7:30 p.m. Dinner includes half or quarter barbecued chicken from Maple Lodge Farms, coleslaw, roll, potato and dessert. Dine in or take out. Proceeds to the church. Churchill Community Church is located at the corner of Churchill Road north and the Erin-Halton Townline in Acton.

Shore Supper: Huttonville United Church hosts a Shore Supper (fish fry) on Thursday, Oct. 18, 5:30-7:30 p.m. at Huttonville Community School. For tickets, adults \$15, children \$7, call 905-455-8258 or 905-453-7392.

Food bank needs help

The Georgetown Bread Basket is very low on several food items— salmon, pasta sauce, skim milk powder, canned juice, cold cereal, crackers, baking goods, canned meat, canned vegetables, canned fruit, instant coffee and we are also low on plastic bags. Any items could be dropped at the food bins at A & P, Food Basics, Price Chopper or The Real Canadian SuperStore.

Anyone who donates money to the Georgetown Bread Basket through Sept. 28 will have that donation matched by the Kraft Hunger Challenge. Donations can be made online, www.cafb.ca or at the food bank on Sinclair Ave.

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