

Ask The Professionals

If you have any questions these professionals can answer, please write to:

"Ask The Professionals"
c/o The Canadian Champion
875 Main Street E.
Milton, Ontario L9T 3Z3
or Fax to: 878-4943

Halton Hills Speech Centre

Division of M. Karen MacKenzie Stepler Speech Language Pathology Professional Corporation

"Your Caring Partners..."

Northview Centre, 211 Guelph St., Suite 5, Georgetown
(905) 873-8400 • www.haltonspeech.com

Q: My 3 year old cannot say the /l/ sound at all. She uses a /w/ sound instead. Should she have speech therapy?

A: Generally speaking, if this is the only sound that she has difficulty with your daughter does not require speech therapy. Children learn sounds in a particular order according to maturation of their oral structures and visibility of the sounds. Typically, children learn the vowel sounds first and then proceed to the sounds involving their lips (p, m, h, w and b). Children should be able to say these sounds correctly by age 3. Next, the child starts to get more control over movements of their tongue and the sounds (t, d, g and l) start to develop. Children should be able to make these sounds correctly by age 4. Next, the child learns to control air flow in his/her mouth and we start hearing sounds such as (f, v, s, z, sh, ch, th). These sounds generally take a little longer to master but the child should be able to do most of them by age 5.

This is a general outline of articulation development. However there are exceptions to every rule. If your child is dropping the first or last sounds of words at any age a speech evaluation is usually required. If your child has difficulty with tongue movements or control, speech therapy may be required early so that later sounds are not affected.

If in doubt, please call for answers. Speech problems are easier to correct at a younger age before the child has developed the habit of saying the sound incorrectly.



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THANKSGIVING

All of us enjoy Thanksgiving; a time well spent with our family, friends and our very important pets. These events usually mean heaps of food, candies, chocolate and of course, turkey. Then there are the leftovers!

Leftovers can be lethal. At these times of the year, our homes are filled with candies, chocolates, turkey and turkey bones. If your pet is allowed free access to these foods, you could run into potential serious medical problems.

Keep the chocolate out of reach: - Most dogs and some cats love chocolate, but chocolate contains a compound that is toxic, if eaten in sufficient quantities. The quantity needed to be poisonous is related to the body weight of the cat or dog. The symptoms vary from gastrointestinal disturbances, abnormalities in the heart function, brain disturbances (seizures) and, in very severe cases, death. I have treated more dogs for chocolate poisoning and hospitalised more dogs for potentially fatal pancreas inflammation at these times of the year.

If you suspect that your pet has ingested chocolate, I would urge you to contact your veterinarian immediately. It is helpful if you are able to report the quantity eaten and the description of the product.

Apply the same caution with "Trick or Treat" candies too!

Turkey Bones: - If consumed, turkey bones and carcasses, or other meat bones can make your pet very sick. In addition, your pet may require very intensive care, with or without surgery. My advice to readers is, that after you have stripped the meat off the bone, done whatever it is that you do with your carcass, wrap it up, and dispose of it, securely, in the garbage. Regardless of your pet's age treat them as if they are toddlers- no matter how well trained your dog is, turkey is turkey! Assume that your pet has a nose that is much more powerful than yours. Do not let them anywhere near the garbage.

On a slightly lighter note, your pet is probably a very important part of the family - and in keeping with the family festivities you will probably want to fill a little "pet bowl" with gravy, stuffing and turkey meat. Just pause there a while! Be aware that we also see many "upset stomachs" in the following days after the festive seasons - remember, this food is very rich in comparison with their normal diet.



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I took my three month old baby to the doctor for a check-up, and she told me that my baby had flat head syndrome. What is that, and can physiotherapy do anything for that?

Flat head syndrome is a problem that babies can get because their skulls are so soft, and the skull becomes flattened when the baby lies in one position for a prolonged period of time.

Because it is important to lie the baby on their back to sleep to prevent SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome), the baby tends to spend a great deal of time in this position at night and during the day sleeping. As well, the infant car seats, although they are so convenient in that they convert into a stroller as well as a car seat, the baby tends to spend a great deal of time in the seat, again with pressure to the back or side of the skull. Over time, the skull can become flattened, and the muscles of the neck shortened on one side because of the position of the head.

What can you do? When the baby is not sleeping or in a stroller, try to get the baby in a new position - upright while holding the baby, or doing tummy time. Get the baby used to being on its tummy. It is great for infant development. If you notice that the baby consistently has its head turned to the same side while sleeping, try to turn it to the other side once in awhile to balance things out.

If you notice your baby developing flat head syndrome, talk to your doctor about it. They may suggest you attend physiotherapy to work on stretching and strengthening the neck muscles to ensure proper alignment during growth and development.

Give the therapists at the Halton Community Rehabilitation Centre a try if your infant has flat head syndrome.



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Q: Every fall when I participate in indoor sports, my feet ache.

A: This is the time of year when many changes occur. The environment around us starts to cool in temperature, leaves start to change colour, our hours of work in the garden come to an end, kids start back to school, winter outdoor and indoor sports begin.

Many of us do not realized the potential for injury when participating in sports. It is usually only when a serious injury results, that we seek medical attention. Many kids and parents alike, often complain of nagging aches and pains, but still compete on school sports teams, the adult sports leagues, or even in grade school gym classes. We must remember that indoor sports involve activities on hard concrete floors which are hard on our joints. Sometimes all that may be required is footwear best suited for the sport or best suited for YOUR particular foot structure.

If footwear is not the problem, braces may be required for the knee or arch supports for the feet. With the help of these devices, you can participate in sports or everyday activities, pain free. If you or your children are constantly plagued by ongoing knee or feet problems, think about what the end result might be in 20 years - arthritis.

A career in sports starts at a young age. It is never too young to detect and treat potential problems.

Elayne Tanner & Associates Inc.



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Q: It seems like all my female friends are depressed. Is this just a 'fad' or are men right when they say we 'get crazy'?

A: Although both men and women suffer from depression, women seem about twice as likely to go through depressive times at some point in their lives. There are a few different reasons for this, some physical and some societal. A major reason of why women suffer depressive symptoms more than men is because of hormonal fluctuations from the time of puberty, menstrual cycles, pregnancy, and menopause. These sometimes very considerable changes can significantly increase risk of depression. The other aspect to women's depression is societally based. Women still tend to be the more frequent victims of abuse; carry the major burden of childcare and domestic responsibilities; get lower pay with fewer benefits in their careers; be single parents and suffer the greatest loss of financial status in divorce. These are all stressors that contribute to depression in women who may already be susceptible. Furthermore, society tends to be very dismissive of women's depression, shrugging it off as 'nerves' rather than finding systemic ways of addressing the issues. Depression can be very effectively treated and the benefits far outweigh any risks of doing so. Research has shown that, while medication is effective, medication combined with counselling is far more effective. Speak to your primary care provider if you suffer the symptoms of depression and deal with it before it takes control of your life.

"HELPING YOU HELP YOURSELF"



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Yvonne
Oliveira

Q: I currently wear hearing aids and have heard about FM systems. What is an FM system and in what situations would I benefit from the use of an FM system?

A: Often referred to as a 'third' ear, an FM system is basically a Frequency Modulated radio. A microphone is either built-in or attached to the transmitter which picks up the speech signal and "broadcasts" it to the FM receiver, worn by the recipient. An FM system improves the 'signal to noise ratio' (i.e., the speech signal becomes more pronounced than the background noise). Many hearing aid wearers do feel that there are several advantages to wearing an FM system paired with their hearing aids for added benefit in situations where they continue to struggle with background noise.

Widespread use of FM systems has been implemented with school age children with hearing loss to give them a 'boost' in the classroom. As a result of newer technology and more discrete, smaller size FM systems, more and more adults are using an FM system as well. FM systems provide significant advantages in giving clients the ability to receive spoken messages in a number of difficult listening situations and have many applications in daily use. Examples where an FM would be helpful are:

1. Noisy Restaurants
2. Group Conversations/Meetings
3. Car rides
4. Cocktail Parties
5. TVs, stereos, iPods, walkmans, and cell phones
6. Guided Tours & Travel
7. Sports, and extracurricular lessons and training
8. Lectures, speeches & educational settings
9. Places of worship

Demonstrations as well as a trial period with an FM system are available. If you have further questions regarding the advantage, use and function of FM systems call the HearSay Speech & Hearing Centre and speak to one of the Audiologists on staff.

If you have further questions or need help ask an Audiologist at the HearSay Speech & Hearing Centre (905)875-3345. We can help!