

**MEDIA  
PLANET**

24 DECEMBER 2007

# CHILDREN'S HEALTH

The best things to do when they are ill and when they are well



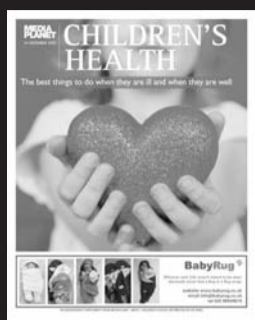
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**MEDIA PLANET**

CHILDREN'S HEALTH  
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# New threat to children from parents' cyber adventures

Buy from a source you can trust not some shady internet auction, says Peter White, chief executive of the Baby Products Association.



A child's health is more than a matter of medicines and vitamins; the equipment they use and the environment we create also play a vital role in their health and safety.

Some cost saving measures can turn out to have been false economies and the choosing of products such as prams, cots or highchairs for our children is a prime example where safety not economy should be the main factor in our decision making.

We all understand the costs can add up when catering for a newborn, making second-hand options very tempting.

But many buyers are unaware of the possible defects that could be present and subsequently cause injury if they buy cheap tat or products that are old and clapped out.

Which is why the Baby Products Association (BPA) has started a campaign to promote responsibility amongst vendors and buyers of this equipment.

We have created "BPA Retail" to set standards for retailers in the nursery products sector.

Parents can feel confident when they see the "BPA Retail" window sticker that the shop represents best

practice in the industry.

Retailers have to comply with stringent conditions to join and membership is growing steadily.

Unfortunately, with the modern phenomenon of internet auction sites ever-more pervasive, the problem of parents and relatives opting to buy from cheap, unreliable sources is likely to get worse.

Not only is buying second-hand gambling with your child's safety and wellbeing but buying new from unchecked sources or from overseas markets can also be dangerous. Can you be sure these products comply with the most recent safety legislation?

Responsible retailers recognise the need for products to comply with the latest safety standards. They also realise that new parents require expert advice and knowledge when making these all-important first purchases.

Choosing the right car seat for your vehicle and ensuring that it is fitted properly can be a minefield and the best nursery retailers are trained to do the job properly.

The BPA promotes the safe use of baby, nursery and childcare products and is an authoritative voice in the nursery industry supporting a safer future for the youngest members of our society.

The BPA works closely with na-



**“To keep children safe keep away from cheap tat and buy good quality”**

PETER WHITE, CEO OF BABY PRODUCTS ASSOCIATION

tional, European and international bodies developing standards and legislation within the nursery sector, keeping members; manufacturers, importers and distributors informed of current regulations is a key objective of the trade association.

**PROMOTIONAL FEATURE**

## Innovative PurFlo mattress give babies sweet dreams

Short-listed for the most innovative new product in this year's Mother & Baby awards, the groundbreaking foam-free and washable design of the PurFlo mattress has revolutionised the way babies sleep.



Invented by a mum of two, PurFlo's unique aluminium frame is covered by a soft surface that allows air to flow freely through. Extensive laboratory testing by Peter Fleming, the UK's leading Professor of Infant Health and developmental physiology, has shown that when used in conjunction with a sleeping bag, PurFlo is better at keeping a baby in 'thermo-neutral' conditions. Professor Fleming says: "Babies are less likely to become too cold and may be less likely to become too warm when using a sleeping bag with this mattress than on a conventional mattress."

Another study by Bureau Veritas – the recognised standards and regulations control experts – found that the foam-free design of the PurFlo pro-

vided babies with a genuine dust-mite free environment. When analyzing the cores of leading mattress brands over 12 weeks after exposing them to house dust mite colonisations, PurFlo was the only mattress to contain absolutely no allergens. The harmful build-up of allergens is known to aggravate childhood allergies such as asthma and eczema. A study by Sporik et al found that in addition to genetic factors, exposure to house-dust mites in early childhood is an important determinant of the subsequent development of asthma.

Recent research carried out by PurFlo in conjunction with www.baby-world.co.uk has revealed that over a third of parents (36%) simply turn a mattress over when their baby is sick or wets itself, leaving the child to sleep in unhygienic conditions. The durability of the PurFlo cot mattress means that it is also suitable for machine washing and the outer cover can be slipped off and washed at up

to 60° to remove any dirt, bacteria or remaining dust mites on the surface.

PurFlo has recently added to their range of cot mattresses and fitted sheets with new SleepSacs. The lining of the SleepSacs is made from Bamboo Dream, a silky soft fabric which is particularly good for babies with sensitive skin. It also contains Amicor Pure, a fibre which is proven to combat the build up of bacteria, fungi and allergies.



The PurFlo mattress is available from the Mothercare website from January 2008 and in over 60 independent UK. For more information call **PurFlo** on **01788 891 890** or visit the redesigned website at **www.purflo.com**

# Is your home child-proof?

Keeping children indoors ought to be the best way to ensure their safety but most accidents happen in the home or its vicinity so the wise parent knows that precautions pay.

BY TOM ROWLAND



## The kitchen

The kitchen is the room where you spend most time, it is also the place in the home with the most risks and the most hazardous chemicals.

To make matters worse, parents are often focused on the actual cooking. So a kitchen can easily become a magical wonderland for youngsters where they feel free to make discoveries. Your task is to make sure the discoveries don't hurt.

- Childproof all drawers and cupboards that contain unsafe equipment and chemicals.
- Make sure all detergents and other hazardous products normally kept under the sink are placed out of reach.

- Use cooker guards and oven door guards on the stove. Remember that pans should always be placed with the handle facing inwards.
- Secure sockets and plugs by placing adequate covers.
- Don't drink hot beverages while the child is in your lap
- Store unsafe equipment securely.
- Keep foods such as nuts, olives etc (things that can easily get stuck in a child's throat) out of reach.
- Do not leave the child unattended in a high chair. Use a safety harness to stop a child standing or falling over.

## The bathroom

The bathroom is a place for playing and splashing, but where there is water there is also a greater risk of danger. You should never leave small children alone in the bathtub, and it is advisable to also use a slip-resistant baby mat when bathing them.

Make sure the changing table is stable and never leave a child unattended on the changing table, keep in mind that all it takes is a half a second for an accident to occur.

## The bedroom

Sleeping posture plays a vital part in your baby's growing years so you need to be careful when putting them to sleep.

Make sure you always use approved window locks on all windows and terrace doors, as well as child proofing all doors with stoppers and finger protectors.

For staircase safety, use stair gates both downstairs and upstairs in order to prevent falling accidents and place slip resistant lining on the steps to be extra safe.

## The car

The laws governing in-car safety are wide and varied for a good reason, road safety should never be taken lightly with children. It is easy to be frustrated and distracted by screaming and shouting children in the back

seat, but it is important to always remain calm (easier to say than to do). But you can at least ensure you take a lot of breaks during longer journeys, it eases tensions and distracts the children.

Use child seats that are adapted to the child's weight and use reverse child seats up to the age of four, if not longer. Use a seatbelt of course and is also good to place a child viewing mirror in the car as it will allow better attentiveness while driving.

## Use a Humidifier

We spend up to 90 per cent of our time indoors where the air is usually much more polluted and far drier than you would expect.

Asthma, allergies and respiratory conditions which are so common among children in the UK today are blamed by many on poor indoor air quality.

The Cauldron is an ultrasonic cool mist humidifier which releases a variable and controlled amount of fresh water vapour into the atmosphere for up to 8 hours at a stretch.

NScesity is a leading specialist in air treatment products. NScesity products are available at John Lewis, JoJoMamanBebe, Mothercare, Toys r Us, and many other leading retailers.

## Keep a First Aid kit at home.

Medicines and bandages are important to have at home for when the child gets injured or falls ill. Plasters and non-alcohol wipes are always needed when raising children. Also make sure that you have antiseptic solutions to wash any wound as well as other relevant products such as a thermometer, suitable pain relief like child dose ibuprofen or paracetamol and soothing creams.



Making sure they are in the right sleeping position is the best thing you can do for them. That means keep them on their backs, not on their fronts.

Never sleep with a child next to you in bed if you have been drinking alcohol or have taken strong medicines.

When putting your child down, never leave them on a bed or sofa – they might fall down. The safest place is on a blanket on the floor or in their crib. Also make sure that no small items are lying around that the child can place in his or her mouth. An older sibling's Lego pieces, for instance.

## Stairs, doors and windows

Thousands of children up and down the UK injure themselves daily and a very large percentage of those accidents involve doors, stairs and windows.



# Somebody to watch over them

There are children's conditions that traditionally the medics have been slow to pick up on and parents can save time and suffering by being aware of the signs to look for.

BY TOM ROWLAND

If you are a parent, your child's health will be of the utmost importance to you and if they are unwell or in pain you will want to ensure that they get the best treatment possible. But sometimes the system needs a push from you.

It can be hard to know what to do for the best if your child is unwell. If you are at all concerned the obvious first step is to take your child to your GP or contact the NHS direct helpline on 0845 46 47 if it is out of hours.

A little strategic pestering of the GP can work wonders because some conditions are so hard to diagnose in the early stages.

The experts say the most impor-

tant thing you can do however is to stay calm so that you do not cause any more stress for your child. Seek medical help and heed the doctor's advice.

If you need support during this stressful time, Action for Sick Children is a charity dedicated to helping and providing information to both parents and children during times of illness. They offer information on all areas of children's healthcare. The information on their website has been developed specifically to help parents cope with, and prepare for, different aspects of children's healthcare. For more information visit:

[www.actionforsickchildren.org](http://www.actionforsickchildren.org)

## MENINGITIS

The disease is most commonly found in babies and children under five years old as their immune systems are a lot weaker.

Despite the symptoms for babies and toddlers being different, one fact is true for both; the disease can kill in hours. For those children who do recover, there is a risk of permanent mental and physical disability. This is why time is so crucial. The earlier the disease is diagnosed the better the recovery rate will be.

The Meningitis Research Foundation's primary role is to spread awareness of meningitis and septicaemia, although it also raises significant funds for research into the conditions to improve treatment and reduce the fatality rate. The foundation stresses how important it is to spot the signs of meningitis early, which can only be achieved if people know what to look for.

Meningitis and septicaemia can be hard to recognise at first. Symptoms can appear in any order, but the first symptoms are usually fever, vomiting, headache and feeling unwell, just like in many mild illnesses.

Meningitis: Fever/vomiting, severe headache, stiff neck (less common in young children), dislike of bright lights (less common in young children), very sleepy/vacant/difficult to wake, confused/delirious, rash anywhere on the body, seizures.

Septicaemia: Fever/vomiting, limb pain, cold hands and feet, pale or mottled skin, breathing fast/breathless, rash, very sleepy/difficult to wake, confused/delirious.

If you are at all concerned that your child may be suffering from meningitis or need advice and support, you can contact the 24 hour hotline on: 080 8800 3344 or visit their web site at: [www.meningitis.org.uk](http://www.meningitis.org.uk).



## DYSLEXIA

The term dyslexia refers to a learning difficulty which is usually associated with reading and spelling. It is present at birth and is a lifelong condition with differing degrees of severity.

If your child suffers from dyslexia, they may find reading and spelling difficult as well as remembering sequences such as numbers and dates.

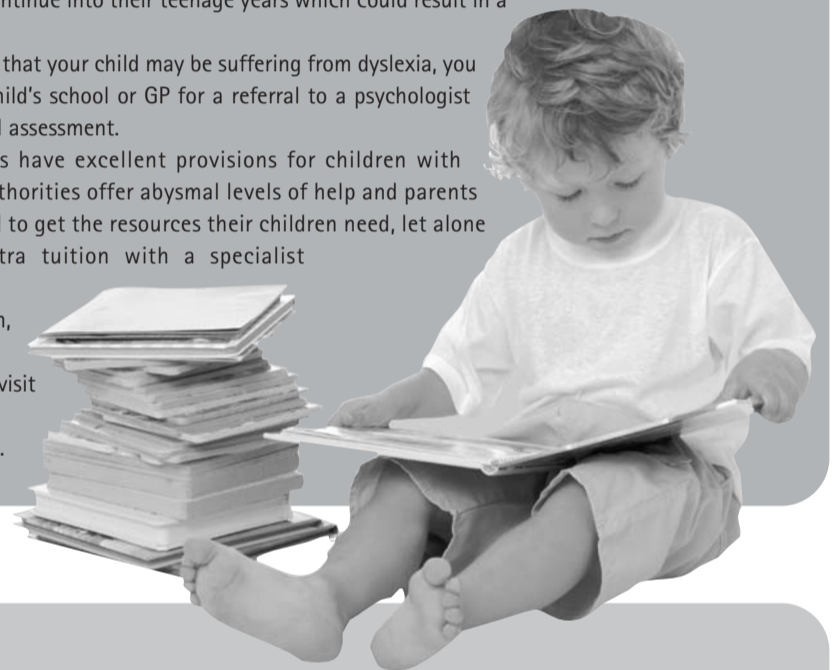
Organising themselves will be hard and they will have bad time-management. On the other hand, they could be very creative with excellent lateral thinking skills.

As your child develops, they will have difficulty with more and more tasks. For example, they may begin to speak later than most children, have difficulty with reading and remembering the alphabet or simple times tables. They may also have trouble tying shoe laces or distinguishing from left and right. These difficulties will continue into their teenage years which could result in a lack of self-esteem.

If you are concerned that your child may be suffering from dyslexia, you should speak to your child's school or GP for a referral to a psychologist who will complete a full assessment.

While some schools have excellent provisions for children with dyslexia many local authorities offer abysmal levels of help and parents will have to battle hard to get the resources their children need, let alone the possibility of extra tuition with a specialist dyslexia teacher.

For more information, contact The British Dyslexia Association or visit their web site at: [www.bdadyslexia.org.uk](http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk).



## ASTHMA

The symptoms might be pretty obvious, not to say devastating and life-threatening in extreme attacks but getting the correct treatment programme into place can be a trial.

If your child suffers from asthma, you may find that you need help and advice on how to manage attacks, the different types of medications and inhalers available, how to control your child's asthma and advice for when your child goes into childcare or school.

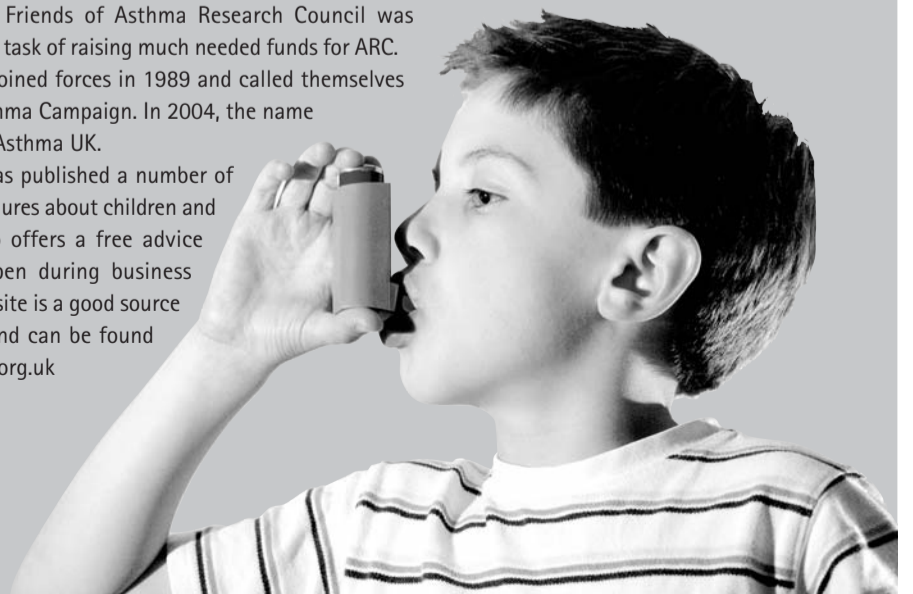
Asthma UK is a charity offering support to the millions of asthma sufferers living in Britain today. The charity works alongside medical professionals, research scientists and sufferers themselves to help spread awareness of the illness, share expert knowledge and reduce the impact asthma has on people's lives.

Asthma UK offers support for families and parents of children who suffer from asthma and the web site details information on what symptoms to look out for.

The charity dates back to 1927 which is when the Asthma Research Council (ARC) was set up to conduct research into the condition.

In 1972, the Friends of Asthma Research Council was founded with the task of raising much needed funds for ARC. The two groups joined forces in 1989 and called themselves the National Asthma Campaign. In 2004, the name was changed to Asthma UK.

Asthma UK has published a number of articles and brochures about children and asthma and also offers a free advice line which is open during business hours. Their web site is a good source of information and can be found at: [www.asthma.org.uk](http://www.asthma.org.uk)



## ALLERGIES

Allergies currently affect one in three people in the UK and of these half are children. The number of sufferers continues to rise every year, which is why expert knowledge and research is crucial.

The symptoms of allergies are varied and can range from a runny nose, itchy eyes and rash to a potentially life-threatening condition known as anaphylaxis.

An allergic reaction occurs when the body's immune system overreacts to a substance, known as an allergen, which is not deemed as being particularly threatening to most people. The immune system tries to fight off the intrusion of this substance and as a result, blood cells release certain chemicals which cause an allergic reaction.

Virtually any substance can be an allergen although the most common offenders are: pollen, pets, wasps and bees, dust mites, food, household chemicals, latex and medications.

If you think that your child is suffering from an allergy, you should contact your GP who may refer you to an allergy specialist. Ask your child to explain how they are feeling and relay this to the doctor. Allergies are often hereditary; so if you know that members of your family also suffer from allergies be sure to let the specialist know.

While allergies can be very disruptive and of course can have potentially fatal consequences, there is treatment available. As well as trying to avoid contact with the harmful allergens, there are a number of treatments available to ease suffering and prevent allergy attacks. These include anti-histamine remedies for allergies such as hay fever; topical creams for skin irritations and adrenaline for more severe attacks such as anaphylaxis.

It is reassuring to know that there is help and support out there and that with the correct treatment, your child can enjoy a healthy life.

Allergy UK is a national medical charity which was set up in 1991 by primary medical specialists to 'improve awareness, management and treatment of allergy'. They are dedicated to providing information for everyone who is affected by allergies. For more information visit: [www.allergyuk.org](http://www.allergyuk.org).



## ECZEMA

Eczema is a skin condition which affects people of all ages and ranges from mild forms to very severe. Up to one-fifth of all school children in the UK suffer from it so your child is not alone. Symptoms include dry and itchy skin which can split and bleed.

It is not contagious but does look very painful. The unpleasant appearance and discomfort felt can be significantly reduced with the correct treatment, although the skin will be ultra-sensitive and prone to flare-ups.

There are many causes of eczema which differ depending on the type of eczema suffered. Atopic eczema is largely regarded as being hereditary and is caused by sensitivity to allergens found all around; while other forms of the condition can be caused by a specific allergy to substances such as detergents, household chemicals and nickel. There is no cure for eczema, but there are many treatments to ease the discomfort felt. These range from over-the-counter topical creams to prescription steroids. There are also many complimentary therapies which have been proven successful. If your child does suffer from eczema, there is evidence that between 60 and 70 per cent of children grow out of the condition by the time they reach their teenage years.

For more information on the signs, causes and treatments of eczema visit the National Eczema Society's web site at: [www.eczema.org](http://www.eczema.org).

## ATTENTION-DEFICIT HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER (ADHD)

A large percentage of children under five are restless and have trouble concentrating. This does not mean that they all suffer from ADHD, but you should still be aware of what to look out for.

Attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is actually an American term which is commonly used to describe what is known in the UK as hyperkinetic disorder and refers to children who are overactive and have severe difficulty in concentrating. Some signs that your child may be suffering from ADHD include: extreme restlessness, interrupting people with constant chatter, being easily distracted and always acting on impulse.

Don't panic, these actually relate to most children; it is only when this behaviour gets out of control and begins to have an impact on the child's education and social life that you should really worry.

It is not known what causes ADHD, although genetics are believed to be a key factor with more boys affected by the condition than girls. Diagnosis involves a child psychiatrist assessing your child and recognising patterns of behaviour commonly found with ADHD sufferers.

If your child is found to be suffering from ADHD, your family will receive help and advice from the educational and medical communities and with enough support, most children will grow out of ADHD.

For more information, visit The National Attention Deficit Disorder Information and Support Service's web site at: [www.addiss.co.uk](http://www.addiss.co.uk).

### PROMOTIONAL FEATURE

## Great Kids Toys

Having been hailed as a success in the USA and Canada for the last 7 years, and collecting many prestigious awards, The Learning Tower™ is now available in the UK and Europe from the exclusive importers Great Kids Toys and other leading outlets.

We all know how children love to get involved in the kitchen and how they gain valuable life skills in the process, but we are equally concerned about their safety at the same time.

The Learning Tower™ brings your child up to the correct and safe working height through its unique self locking and adjustable platform whilst the sides prevent them falling over or reaching places that present a danger. Designed to allow the child to access the platform area themselves, thus reducing the need to lift them in and out, The Learning Tower™ becomes their own special place.

By encouraging your child to participate in a safe environment it also helps to build that important adult/child rapport by adding time in the day when you can interact; promotes healthy eating and stimulates creativity.

Constructed from layered birch, the attractive natural finish is easy to maintain.

Suitable for children aged over 18 months The Learning Tower™ will enhance the life skills of your child every day for many years to come.

### FREE POSTAGE AND PACKING

When ordered direct from [www.greatkidstoys.co.uk](http://www.greatkidstoys.co.uk)  
quote ref TT/CHS on your order to receive free P & P in the UK  
Telephone 01422 351 726 for more information



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[www.elephantbeanbags.co.uk](http://www.elephantbeanbags.co.uk)

elephant 



# Mum is always right – sight!

Children do not know what normal eye sight means. They believe they see the same as everybody else, even though they might be short sighted or only have one developed sight nerve.

◀ Window on the world: it is important to pick up problems early

Does your child have a lazy eye, turn their heads often, squint a lot and shut their eyes, complain about head aches or are reluctant to go to school? All these can be signs of poor vision which should be referred to your GP or school nurse, who will be able to give a referral to see a specialist.

It is important to discover eye problems as early as possible whilst they can still be treated, says eye doctor John Wirsching.

A "lazy eye" or an amblyopic eye means that one eye is not used and hence the nerve is not developed. By the time a child starts at school, it may be too late for treatment. The treatment should commence as early as possible, no later than after four years of age.

Throughout nursery and primary school, the parents should pay special attention to signs of problems with vision. If in doubt, "mum is always right". Take the child to a specialist (there are some opticians which offer free eye tests for children) and get a diagnosis as early as possible. In general, the health institutions are very good at discovering these disabilities.

It becomes obvious whether there

has been enough attention paid to the children's eyes. By this time, all major issues should have been sorted, but minor variations can still be treated. Learning difficulties

related to reading can be a clear sign of something being wrong with the eyes. It is something that can be solved, but it can inflict discomfort for the child.

## FAQs

### SHOULD CHILDREN READ BEFORE GOING TO SLEEP?

It might influence the quality of the sleep itself, but it will hardly harm the eyes. Actually they will read with more ease than their parents and grandparents because of their lower need for light to see.

### WHAT ABOUT COMPUTER GAMES?

They can stimulate the eye muscle quite a lot, but everything should be in moderation.

### HAS THE OCCURRENCE OF EYE PROBLEMS INCREASED IN GENERAL?

No, computers, computer games and television demand a quite attentive viewer and optimal eye sight.

### HOW DO YOU MOTIVATE CHILDREN WITH PRESCRIPTIONS TO WEAR GLASSES?

If glasses are needed and correctly adjusted, it is normally not difficult to get the child to wear them. Occasionally they will be reluctant or even refuse to wear them. If that is the case, you should team up with the specialist or GP to motivate the child. Often it helps to get someone else than the parents to talk to them.

An impaired eye can become permanent due to lack of glasses or eye patch. Bullying because of glasses is normally not a problem, but it can be worth the effort to get the teacher to talk about it and help with social acceptance.

## PROMOTIONAL FEATURE

# Simple steps to improving your family's health

90% of our time is spent indoors where the air is usually much more polluted and far drier than you would expect.

Asthma, allergies and respiratory conditions which are so common amongst children in the UK today are on the increase, many people believe that indoor air quality is a major contributor to this.

Old fashioned drafts are a thing of the past, modern improvements to our homes have only compounded the problem; central heating, fitted carpets, double glazing and insulation all contribute to an unhealthy sealed living environment. Add to this the increased use of chemicals from detergents, air fresheners and cleaning agents that linger in our homes – that's why products that improve air quality are no longer a luxury, they have become mainstream and feature in many homes, especially where there are babies and children.

### Why use an Air Cleaner

Indoor airborne pollutants include dust mite waste, cleaning agent residues, bacteria, mould spores .....it's a very unpleasant list and it's what

you and your child are breathing in every day, even in a clean home.

The 602 UV Plasma Air Purifier from NScessity has a seven stage filtration process which utilises several methods to clean air.

HEPA filtration is proven to remove 99.97% of airborne particles larger than 0.3 microns in size – that includes pet dander, pollen and other dust particles.

The very latest plasma sterilising and photo catalytic technologies will destroy 97% of airborne viruses, bacteria and volatile organic compounds.

Carbon filters will absorb and neutralise lingering odours from smoking, cooking, cleaning agents or pets.

The in-built ioniser generates and releases negative ions into the air – freshening the already cleaned air.

NScessity Air Purifiers are priced between £27.99 and £99.99.

### Why use a Humidifier

Dry throats and skin, itchy eyes and increased susceptibility to coughs, colds and respiratory infections are just some



of the results of humidity being too low. Room temperature is known to be important for babies and children's health, but not many people realise that the relative humidity is just as important.

For optimum health and comfort, we should be living with humidity of 45-55%.

At this time of the year when we are living with central heating on, relative humidity can drop to just half of this and as a result our health can

start to suffer. Humidifiers replace lost moisture and restore natural balance, relieving many of the symptoms associated with dry air.

The Cauldron is an Ultrasonic Cool Mist Humidifier, it releases a variable and controlled amount of fresh water vapour into the atmosphere for up to 8 hours at a stretch. Simply fill the tank from the tap and switch on. When the tank is empty, the humidifier automatically switches itself off.

The Baby Essentials Ionic Humidifier was designed specifically with nurseries and children's health in mind. The built in ioniser will help to create a fresh and healthy sleeping environment for your child. It is very compact and also features a built in night light.

Humidifiers are priced between £29.99 and £49.99

NScessity are specialists in air treatment, their products are available from John Lewis, JoJoMamanBebe, Mothercare, Toys r Us, and many other leading retailers.

If you want to find a stockist in your area, call us on **01483 428 989** or email [info@nscosity.co.uk](mailto:info@nscosity.co.uk) [www.nscosity.co.uk](http://www.nscosity.co.uk)

## CHILDREN'S HEALTH Nutrition

# The way to a healthy child

Fish and vegetables give your child greater possibilities to succeed: Children who eat healthily have more energy, better concentration, increased performance at school, healthier teeth, and the reduced the chance of obesity.

BY BRYN JONES

The health wave is rolling over the Nation. More and more people are concerned about providing the right nutrition for their children. And with good reason; - Children who eat healthily have more energy, do better in school and reduce the chance of being overweight, says nutritionist Cathrine Borchsenius.

Studies show that those who eat healthily as a child, continue to eat healthily as adults, as the foundations of our eating habits are laid during our infant years. This in turn means that children who eat healthily will have reduced risk of developing life style diseases such as diabetes, obesity and cardiovascular diseases, as

grown ups. Those who eat lots of fruit, berries and greens, will also have less of a risk to develop cancer, she says. The consequences of living on crisps and soda can be dramatic.

Children are growing and an extremely unhealthy diet might influence the growth and height of the child. Some children get too little iron; this can also add to the negative impact on growth and lead to discomfort and tiredness. Too little calcium and vitamin D can lead to Rickets, she warns.

#### Accustom the kid to new flavors

It is not always easy to get a child to like fish and vegetables. Cathrine advises parents to introduce this kind of



## SOFT TORTILLAS

1 tin sweetcorn  
1 avocado  
1/2 glass black olives  
1 red pepper  
1 tin red beans  
1/2 cucumber  
1 bowl sliced cherry tomatoes  
1 bowl lettuce  
2 diced chicken breasts lightly flavored

Dressing: pre-made garlic dressing or sour cream

For the grown ups: jalapenos and salsa.

food early. - The sooner the child adapts to the new tastes, the easier it is to get the child to continue to eat different things. Children accustomed to eating full grained bread, fish and vegetables from a young age, are likely to continue eating them when they grow older. But every child is different - some are simply very picky about what they eat. They may say that they no longer like food they used to like. This will normally pass over time. If the child does not like vegetables, then add a small portion on the plate anyway.

After a while, it becomes something that the child will recognise and it is more likely that they start eating it when it is available as opposed to not being there at all. "My children's favorite vegs (they are 3 and 5) are wraps which they can compose themselves. I put bowls with different ingredients on the table and let them choose" explains Cathrine Borchsenius.

#### Good for kids

Give children as little sugar and sweet drinks as possible the first years (add gradually as a treat) to avoid encouraging a sweet tooth. Children who are not allergic should drink milk as it is rich in nutrition and an important source of calcium. However children under the age of one should not drink milk as they get full and might miss

out on other types of important food, which can in turn lead to a lack of iron. When the child is 6 months old, start introducing new flavours. Mash you own dinner and feed the child instead of always serving pre-made baby food. Introduce darker bread, not just white, as early as possible. Some children don't like bread with full grains, but there is lots of "white" brown bread in the market. Do not give them sweet spreads. Remember five servings of fruit and vegetable every day (including potatoes, berries and juice). A child's portion can be half an apple, half a banana, a third of a carrot, a mandarin or some grapes. Water is by far the best drink. When eating bread you can serve milk with a variation of juice occasionally.

## Are Baby Bottles Toxic?

Around 95% of baby bottles on the market are made of a plastic called Polycarbonate. This plastic contains a chemical known as Bisphenol-A (BPA), which mimics a human hormone, and has been found to be extremely toxic.

Lab tests have proven that when baby bottles are heated and washed, potentially dangerous levels of BPA leach into the liquid.

While industry leaders continue to defend the use of BPA, it has been linked by scientists to cancers, impaired immune function, obesity, diabetes, hyperactivity and early onset of puberty.

BPA can be found in other plastic food and drink containers widely used, but children are far more susceptible to adverse affects from chemical exposures than adults, even at very low doses, with children under the age of three being the most vulnerable, because of their body weight.

This has been a hot topic in America for some time and in December last year San Francisco became the first state to ban the sale of baby feeding bottles that contain this controversial chemical. Since then the debate has escalated as the media uncovered the story that baby bottle manufacturers have tried to keep hidden.

#### So what can I do to protect my child?

Environmentalists are calling for clearer labeling by manufacturers whose baby

products contain BPA, so that parents can make an informed decision before purchasing equipment that could pose a potential long term danger to their child.

Meanwhile, the best advice is, make sure to avoid any clear, shiny baby bottles, or look for manufacturers who use only safe Bisphenol-A free plastic for their products, like BornFree™.

BornFree™ produce a complete range of safe baby feeding bottles and equipment that are free from Bisphenol-A.

For further information about the risks of Bisphenol-A and more about BornFree's safe products please call 0208-732-4728 or go to [www.babybornfree.co.uk](http://www.babybornfree.co.uk)



## WHAT IS HEALTHY?

- As much berries, greens and fruits as possible
- As little sugar as possible
- Unsaturated fat, not saturated versions
- Trimmed fillets, not minced meats
- Lots of fish
- Low in fat milk products

Sources:  
Cathrine Borchsenius



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# New Trio For Me. If mum had wheels...



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Stroller reversible seat unit



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and to receive our latest catalogue, please call 01623 750870.



Wherever there's a baby

# Get out of doors for a great time

Winter is not a good season to get children out of the house and away from computer games - there are too many good excuses for staying in the warm - but it is worth the effort and pays dividends.

BY TOM ROWLAND



More than three-quarters of parents in the UK are concerned about the content of video games, according to a survey commissioned by Microsoft.

But British parents don't feel as though they have any say over whether video games are suitable or not, with 60 per cent believing they had a "less than average" influence over what kind of games their children played.

By comparison, two thirds of the European parents surveyed believed it was their responsibility to decide which computer games were most suitable for their children, and almost half thought that youngsters should play a maximum of one hour of computer games per day.

The survey comes just a few weeks before Dr Tanya Byron releases her Government-backed report examining the impact video games and the internet is having on children in the UK.

▲ Beauty on thin ice: Greenwich Ice rink open at the Old Royal Naval College until mid- January.

So time to turn over a new leaf this holidays. There is a huge amount out there for both children and parents you just have to go and look.

#### Icy sparkle

Ice skating on what is undoubtedly London's most beautiful skating rink between the colonnades of the Old Royal Naval College in Greenwich is now in its fourth year.

They also sell hot chocolate, mulled wines and mince pies for afterwards.

There are other open rinks over the Christmas holidays at Kew Gardens, Hampton Court, Royal Windsor and the Tower of London as well as at the Hyde Park Winter Wonderland, which also includes a toboggan slide, a 50

metre high observation wheel with spectacular views over the park, carol concerts and a giant Christmas tree as well as a German Christmas market.

#### Good food for thought

Cookery classes for children have come a long way since the days of custard tarts and now they can try their hand at something creative including mozzarella and pancetta.

The Junior Chef Masterclass staged by the City Café Westminster aim to teach children about good food in a fun-packed class and are targeted at the 8 to 12 age range.

They get to try their hand at dishes like butternut squash, honey and sage soup or smoked haddock and salmon fishcake, creamed leeks and baby spinach and then they do a comparison against other fish cakes bought from the high street ugh!!

The bad taste of the latter is washed away with apple tart with thyme and vanilla ice cream.

At Halloween the celebration menu featured Mozzarella Mummy, a daring dish of buffalo mozzarella bandaged with pancetta with tomato and aged balsamic. They also had Black Magic Pasta filled with halloween pumpkin, ricotta and sage and Dracula's Midnight Raspberry mess with whipped cream, fresh raspberries and meringue.

The aim is to foster good eating habits and the idea that cooking can be creative and fun, while providing the perfect excuse to get their hands dirty, says executive chef Peter Lloyd who runs the Junior Chef Masterclasses.

"I like to show the kids that cooking is fun and that healthy ingredients are much tastier than the processed foods on the supermarket shelves", he explains.

The Junior Chef Masterclasses cost £35 per adult and child; to include full recipes of the day's dishes and a City Café apron.

#### Junior Masterclass Dates:

Saturday January 12 2008: An introduction to good food.

Saturday February 2 2008: An introduction to good food.

To book Call Tanja Petersen on 020 7932 4701 or email: westminster.admin@cityinn.com.

#### Drama queens (and kings)

Drama classes are a great way to unlock a child's imagination, develop their communication skills and give them the chance to learn some of the skills and tricks of the actor's life.

But it can be hard to find a good class, the best fill up quickly and there

are enormous waiting lists for many.

The well respected youth theatre operated by the Mercury Theatre in Colchester, for example, even warns about the length of the waiting list on its web site.

A good acid test of the quality of a drama school is to ask about its examination successes. Being examined in the performing arts might sound faintly absurd but it is a good way to measure progress against an internationally applied standard and also to make contact with expert assessors outside the immediate teaching environment.

The most well respected examination regime is run by the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Arts, which dates from 1861, making the Academy the oldest of its kind in Britain, with a long-established reputation for excellence.

“Short drama lessons are best because children keep focused”

Tracey O'Donnell

Tracey O'Donnell runs a drama school in Essex which offers LAMDA courses.

At the moment she operates classes covering the age range of 4 to 18 from local halls around the Marks Tey area but she has plans to turn a Grade II listed barn into a drama school and theatre space shortly.

Typically her students do one hour sessions rather than the full morning or afternoon sessions that many drama schools opt for. There are advantages to short lessons she argues; the students are more fresh and they do not spend time hanging around waiting for the next activity and consequently get a more concentrated experience. Contact. Tracey O'Donnell 07970 898628.

For drama classes in other areas: www.all4kidsuk.com www.all4kidsuk.com has a good data base of drama classes and clubs nationwide.

#### Tea dances for under fives

The idea of a café specially for the under fives might seem odd, after all the customers do not really have much say but it has caught on because keeping the little ones entertained inevitably makes for a more relaxing atmosphere for their elder siblings, parents and carers.

Park cafés aren't always great. Some are still in the dark ages, offering bad tea, stale sausage rolls and tooth-rotting chocolate to innocent children and their

## Greenwich Ice baroque setting

#### TIMES / TICKETS

Per session including skate hire: Adult: £9.50; Children (under 16): £7.00; Concessions: £8.00; Family ticket (1 Adult and 3 Children or 2 adults and 2 Children): £28.00. Special Offer - Skate all day - £7.50 on 7,8,9,10,11 January 2008 10:00 am - 5:00 pm.

Children under the age of 12 must be accompanied by an adult.

#### SESSION BOOKING

Greenwich Tourist Information Centre open from 10am to 5pm

#### ON-LINE

www.greenwichicerink.com

#### BY PHONE

0870 169 0101 (booking fees apply)

#### TIMED SKATING SESSIONS:

|                |               |
|----------------|---------------|
| 10am-11am      | 4pm-5pm       |
| 11am-noon      | 5.15pm-6.15pm |
| 12.15pm-1.15pm | 6.30pm-7.30pm |
| 1.30pm-2.30pm  | 7.45pm-8.45pm |
| 2.45pm-3.45pm  | 9pm-10pm      |

#### OTHER LINKS

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www.hamptoncourticerink.com  
www.royalwindsoricerink.com  
www.toweroflondonicerink.com  
www.hydeparkswinterwonderland.com

carers. But they are getting better, and many now recognise the needs and wants of their young clients and their older companions.

For the model of how it should be done, where better than Hampstead. The Brew House is a cosy café is set on a lower floor and part of the terrace of the great mansion at Kenwood.

The outside offers spectacular gardens, the interior high ceilings and an elegant set of surroundings that heralds a seriously good café with nourishing if naughty cakes aplenty plus some more healthy options.

#### Garden Café

The Garden Café in Regents Park was renovated in 2005. On sunny days the big open space leads onto an open terrace. Inner Circle, Regents Park, NW1 4NU (020 7935 5729/www.thegardencafe.co.uk). Baker Street or Regents Park tube. Open 10am-dusk daily.

  
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**CHILDREN'S HEALTH** Learning abilities

# Give your child mental challenges

Scientists agree that individual differences in intelligence are determined by both inheritance and environment. Thus it is very important to know how best to stimulate a child mentally. But where should one draw the line on what is responsible influence?

The environment, both before and after birth, determines the development of the cognitive potential that the child has inherited. In order for the intelligence to develop, the child needs stimulation during the childhood; but to which degree? Parents are more and more concerned about their child's ability to read and write before they start at school and this is boosting sales of so-called pedagogically games and books aimed at children in nursery. Parents like the enhanced focus on mathematics and pedagogical games in nursery. They not only introduce numbers and counting, but also play games with cubes and dices aimed at increasing the children's interest for numbers and maths. The aim is to guide the children into the concepts of mathematics and stimulate faster development of their num-

bers skills. But is it solely positive to push the child to increase their learning abilities?

#### Decide which level they're at

What is really important is that the parents decide or find out at which level the child is at and that they do not try to push them to accomplish things that they do not have the basics of understanding. It may become counter productive; they can be put off by not mastering any of the tasks. There are huge individual variations for children within the same age group; some children learn to read by themselves at the age of four – five and there are children who do not have any interest for this at that stage at all, says professor in psychology Lars Smith. He emphasises that reading, writing and number training whilst a child is still young can be very positive for the cognitive development,

as long as it happens on the child's own premises and encourages parents to try new things. There are few or none clinical tests on the effect of different types of early mental stimulation (i.e. reading stories at bed time) in the nursery stage compared to no stimulation. This is mainly because it would be very difficult to accomplish in a controlled manner, says Smith.

"We would have had to control the impact of other factors such as the socioeconomic status, which we know is important, and the intellectual abilities to the children to begin with, says the professor. The children would have to be divided into two groups, where one got to determine the type and shape of the stimulation and the other could not decide. Few parents and teachers would be willing to participate in such

a test/survey. There is however some research that has been looking at the link between early linguistic learning and understanding and the ability to understand and analyse texts later in life" explains Smith

#### Promote concept learning

Children, who get optimal opportunities to develop their phonological skills, i.e. the awareness of the linguistic sound system, and their own language before starting school, are best geared to develop text using skills.

If done in a pedagogically smart way, with awareness of their growing achievement level, one can enhance their concept learning, through games. Especially children whose parents are not the most resourceful will have huge advantages of efforts done

in the nurseries. Stimulation of language through games with letters, storytelling etc. is important, but if the teaching turns into demands and expectations, it will not have the same positive effect.

Even though many parents are concerned about their children learning as much as possible, it should not compromise other elements that are important in everyday life of the children; playing games and having fun with other children.

Infants are very curious individuals and want to explore everything that is new.

Take that challenge seriously, is the advice from Smith. When the child reaches a certain development level, there are skills they almost master, the challenge for the parents at this stage is to understand and predict where the potential is for the child and guide and help the child to get there.



## SMART MOTHERS

American scientists have discovered that women become smarter after giving birth. Both memory and learning capabilities increases considerably when they become mothers, claims the study. It is the professors Craig Kinsley from the Richmond University and Kelly Lambert from the Randolph-Macon College who recently published their findings in the Scientific American. According to the scientists, the ability to use the senses increases shortly after the birth. A mother is therefore capable of better recognising her baby using sounds and smells.

## Trumpeting the arrival of the new Elephant beanbag!

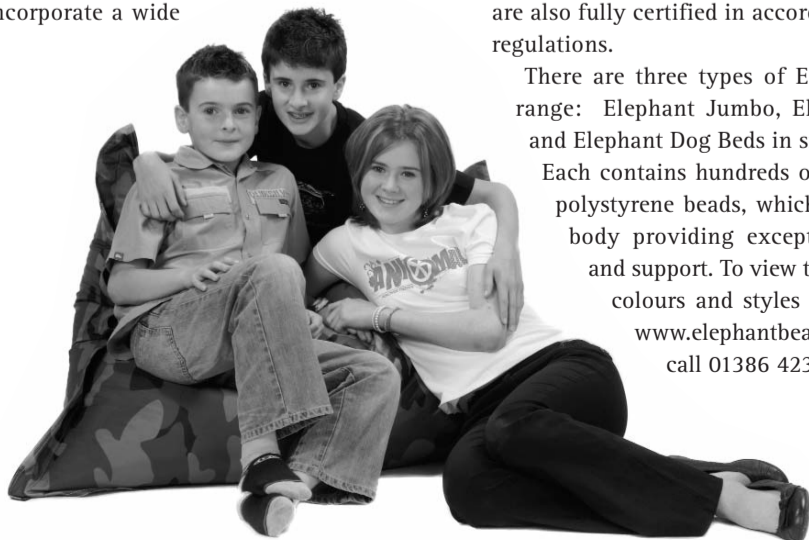


Oversized, generously filled and beautifully made, Elephant beanbags have now launched in the UK! At the top end of the luxury beanbag market, Elephants are professionally designed to incorporate a wide

range of colours and patterns and provide the ideal solution for everyday lounging, whether in family rooms, studio apartments, conservatories or teenage hangouts. Water resistant, durable and easy to wipe clean, Elephants are also fully certified in accordance with fire regulations.

There are three types of Elephant in the range: Elephant Jumbo, Elephant Junior and Elephant Dog Beds in small and large.

Each contains hundreds of thousands of polystyrene beads, which mould to the body providing exceptional comfort and support. To view the full range of colours and styles available, visit [www.elephantbeanbags.co.uk](http://www.elephantbeanbags.co.uk) or call 01386 423760.



## CLEARLY HERBAL NATURAL BABY WIPES

Award winning Clearly Herbal Natural Baby Wipes use a natural lotion with tea tree oil, green tea, aloe vera and de-ionised water to heal, soothe and cleanse irritated skin.

Alcohol, perfume, lanolin and SLS free Clearly Herbal natural wipes are even suitable for babies with sensitive skin including eczema and psoriasis. They use natural aromatherapy oils of lavender and chamomile to soothe baby and the wipes help prevent and treat nappy rash.

Dee Evans started the business as the result of her own experience; with her son who suffered from eczema. The problems she was having finding a suitable wipe were echoed in numerous conversations with other parents. The wipes were launched with phenomenal success and Clearly Herbal have more products in the pipeline for 2008 including: 100% Bio-degradable Bamboo Cloth Natural Wipes.

For further information and for stockists visit [www.clearlyherbal.com](http://www.clearlyherbal.com) or call 0845 634 3173



# School boy's life transformed by breakthrough bean bag cure

Aaron Randal, eleven, was diagnosed with dyslexia, dyspraxia, Asperger's syndrome and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. His learning difficulties didn't simply affect him academically, but socially too. He was bullied at school and things got so bad he says that "every day I wanted to die".

Aaron's teachers described him as an "uncontrollable nuisance" and "lazy". His condition meant that academically he was years behind the rest of his class and was so frustrated that he would sometimes be aggressive towards his mother. In the end he was so badly bullied his parents had to withdraw him from the school.

His mother, Marie, recalls "his writing was like a spider had gone across the page with a pair of roller skates. At age ten he was reading like a five year old. He was also extremely disruptive and was constantly climb-

ing up the walls because he couldn't do what other children could do".

Marie was at her wits end when she heard about the Dore Programme, a non drugs based treatment for people with learning difficulties such as dyslexia and ADHD.

The treatment is completely non-invasive and aims to correct cerebellum developmental delay (CDD), which Dore believes is the root cause of learning difficulties.

The programme uses simple repetitive exercises to stimulate the cerebellum (the tangerine shaped part at the back of the brain responsible for eye tracking and co-ordination). The exercises vary from juggling bean bags to balancing on balancing boards and help improve learning, language, emotion and co-ordination.

Seven years since it was set up the Dore Programme has already changed the lives of over 25,000 around the world including celebrities such as Toyah Wilcox and Strictly Come Dancing star Kenny Logan who says "there is no way I would have been able to learn the moves for Strictly if I hadn't done the Dore exercises... it completely changed my life".

Marie says the improvement she witnessed in her son was astounding: "After being on the Dore Programme for

twelve months Aaron achieving the highest grades in his class and emotionally he is like a different person - much more confident and social. Recently he made me a cup of coffee, sat down beside me and told me he loved me. I was

so overwhelmed - there were tears in my eyes." Aaron has improved so much academically that his teachers have been amazed. When he was ten he was predicted L2s in his SATS... he achieved L5s. He also came top of the

year in a maths test and has now been moved up a set.

*If you would like to know more about Dore please go to [www.dore.co.uk](http://www.dore.co.uk) or call 01926 514033*



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# Stem cell deposits for insurance tomorrow

Stem cells are the body's building blocks used during growth and repair and in the future may offer a way to treat patients suffering from a range of conditions with personalised replacement cells and tissue.

BY TOM ROWLAND

The field of stem cell research may still be very young and there is no guarantee that any particular line will eventually lead to an established treatment but the best time to harvest stem cells is from the very young. Stem cells are most abundant in the umbilical cord.

Which has prompted companies to offer services to collect, freeze and store individual tissue banks for babies.

It should be emphasised that there are no guarantees and having your own stem cell bank might not in the end be necessary.

A Japanese team made headlines world-wide a few days ago when it announced a way to turn adult skin cells, taken from a woman's face, into stem cells, negating the need to start with embryonic tissues.

The advance prompted stem cell pioneer Prof. Ian Wilmut to say he would adopt the new method rather than the one his team used to clone Dolly the sheep.

But having a stem cell bank might be

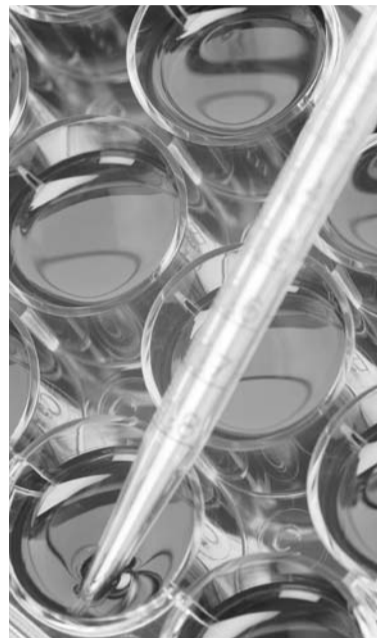
a great investment that the next generation could be hugely grateful to their parents for setting up.

Within a few years, scientists hope, these early techniques could be fine-tuned so that a person requiring a transplant could have their own organ grown for them or if they were injured have their own cartilage and ligaments generated in the laboratory ahead of surgery.

The laboratory-grown parts would obviously not have the problem of being rejected by the body because they are actually a part of their body albeit it from cells that have been frozen for the past couple of decades.

The research base looks promising. A new application of stem cells was reported this month when a group of scientists transplanted embryonic heart cells into cardiac tissue of mice that had had heart attacks.

Afterwards the mice were no longer vulnerable to abnormal heart rhythms, a major danger to people after an attack.



▲ The storage of cells in multiple locations is seen as a way of cutting risk

As is often the case the direct application of stem cells was short lived. This team decided that it would not be practical to use embryonic stem cells on humans.

But their work led to the isolation of a specific protein present in the embryonic heart cells.

As a result they were able to take the first steps to develop a technique which could eventually see

them take tissue from a patient, modify these cells and then use the resulting mix to repair damage to the electrical circuitry of the heart to cure incorrect rhythms in the lower chambers.

If it is hard for researchers to predict outcomes, then having a personal store of stem cells might be a good idea.

Cells4Life was founded by doctors to store their own children's stem cells.

It claims to be the only UK company to store the whole blood from the umbilical cord, not just the stem cells. Whole blood has been shown to be of greater therapeutic value in recent peer-reviewed publications than extracted stem cells.

The argument is that keeping whole blood is "future proofing" your child's blood for many future scientific developments, the rationale for all stem cell banking.

It also says it stores cord material in 3 to 6 separate vials in two separate locations.

Virgin Health Bank offers parents-to-be the opportunity of storing their baby's stem cells in dual private and public storage bank after their baby's birth.

"I'm absolutely passionate about the possibilities of stem cells which is why I'd like to make sure the future benefits are open to everyone," says Sir Richard Branson.

Virgin Health Bank says that because in a child's early years their own stem cells are unlikely to help if they fell ill and they would need healthy, donated cells their public/private banking system has big advantages.

## Calpol

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The makers of Calpol understand what it's like to be a parent. That's why for the past 41 years, parents like you have trusted Calpol to help provide pain and fever relief for their children, getting them back to their normal selves.

Traditionally, Calpol is known for its gentle effectiveness in treating pain and fever in babies and children. You may be most familiar, for example, with Calpol Infant Suspension, which can both help to reduce a child's temperature and provide gentle pain relief. Calprofen, an ibuprofen suspension from the makers of Calpol, has provided parents with an effective solution for treating minor injuries such as sprains and strains, as well as relieving pain and fever. Calprofen starts to work on fever in 15 minutes and lasts for up to eight hours.

In addition, Calpol SixPlus Suspension has been specially formulated for older children aged six years and above.

### Always read the label

Calpol Infant Suspension contains paracetamol and can be used from two months (in babies more than 4kg and not premature)

Calprofen contains ibuprofen and can be used from three months (in babies more than five kg)

Calpol Sixplus suspension contains paracetamol and can be used from six years.



**NEW**

From the makers of Calpol.

# Why do kids constantly bring home colds?



Annoying, isn't it? And, unless you keep your kids inside (which you wouldn't), they are going to bring the odd thing home. New CalCold can help make unexpected houseguests a little easier to live with. It gently relieves pain, eases breathing and helps unblock stuffy noses. You'll find it in our new range that includes medicine for coughs and is specially designed just for children. CalCough Chesty contains Guafenesin. CalCough Ticky contains Glycerol. Always read the label.

Helping make kids feel better.

