



HEALTH TIP: When you exercise, have a glass of milk as it helps you recover that lost energy and repairs the muscles



Papaya is rich in several nutrients like Vitamin C, which can keep you free from stress



ASK THE SEXPERT
 DR MAHINDER WATSA

1 I am a 29-year-old man and my wife is 25 years old. We have a one-year-old child. We are happy with one child and don't plan to have any more children. We want to know whether it is safe for my wife to get a family planning operation done to avoid conception or should we stick to using a condom to avoid pregnancy for the rest of our lives? We have also been suggested to use birth control pills and copper T. Are they safe or can they cause any harm to the body?

It would be wise to adopt a temporary method. If the condom works for both, go with it. Else, both of you could consider copper T for a few years before considering a permanent method.

2 I am 35 years old and I masturbate daily. I have noticed that whenever I masturbate, I experience an acute sharp pain in my lower abdomen on the right side. I also experience some pain on the head of penis when erect. Do I have a problem that requires medical attention? What should I do?

Please visit a urologist. The cause must be known and treated accordingly.



SEND YOUR QUERIES TO
 Ask the Sexpert, Mumbai Mirror,
 Times Of India Building, Dr D N Road,
 Mumbai 400001 or email at
drwatsa@timesgroup.com.
 Contact Dr Watsa, send an email to
mcwatsa@hotmail.com

Dr Watsa does not personally endorse any particular pharmacological brand

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RAJESH NOT DEALS

Mindfulness for kids

Developing a keen awareness of being in the present can help minors focus better

I Sumi Sukanya Dutta
 mirrorfeedback@timesgroup.com

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Mindfulness for adults has proven advantages. But the benefits of the same for minors are unquestionable. As reported in the NYT, "Part of the reason why mindfulness is so effective for children can be explained by the way the brain develops. While our brains are constantly developing throughout our lives, connections in the prefrontal circuits are created at their fastest rate during childhood. Mindfulness, which promotes skills that are controlled in the prefrontal cortex, like focus and cognitive control, can therefore have a particular impact on the development of skills including self-regulation, judgment and patience during childhood." Psychotherapist Trinjhna Khattar says, "Mindfulness means being more present and in awareness of what is happening around us and to us. Children who practise it will be more mindful in their daily life, without worrying about the future or the past, and be less distracted."

Down with stress

That children today are expected to negotiate homework, assignments, exams, extra-curriculars, while keeping up with their hobbies and social engagements, cumulatively means much stress. Tara Mehta, clinical psychologist at S L Raheja Hospital says, "Mindfulness is a great tool to help them live in the moment and improve interpersonal relationships." Dr Kavita Gohil, paediatrician with Zen Hospital feels that mindfulness can also be a tool that can help explore new sensa-

tions, including those that are pleasant, neutral and unfamiliar and can help teaching forgiveness in kids. "Recent studies have also shown that mindfulness can be helpful to children with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and reduce aggression, anxiety and stress," she says.

Everyday mindfulness

Dr Gohil advises training children on skills to develop the awareness of their inner and outer experiences. "It will help them understand how emotions manifest in their bodies, recognise when their attention has wandered and provide tools for impulse control," she says. "But know that mindfulness is not to be forced, it should be gradually developed".

Mithali Divya, a resident of Andheri, who has been trying to inculcate mindfulness in her 12-year-old daughter Aavika says that one of her lessons include mindful awareness during everyday chores such as walking, eating and teaching kids to

truly be in that moment. "I go on listening walks with Aavika and ask her to describe the sounds she heard and what that sound reminds her of and how it can help recollect a happy experience," she says.

Jasmine Khattar, clinical and executive director at the Institute for Exceptional Children and a parenting expert, suggests that parents need to encourage children to focus on the present and thus raise their situational awareness. "For example, while teaching children about eating manners, parents can help them focus on smelling the different flavours, how does it look, what colours are present on their plate, slowly taste the food instead of nagging them about their food habits."

She also advises that instead of giving children mobile phones for playing games, one should encourage their child to activities like painting or sculpting by using clay. "Let your child feel the clay, smell it, and see a shape being formed. Using five senses and working with materials helps to build one's mindfulness."

Inculcate the habit slowly

In the opinion of Munmun Ganeriwal, nutritionist and fitness consultant and founder of Yuktahaar, the simplest and most effective way in which parents can help is by practising it themselves.

So, parents need to learn to unplug themselves from all tech devices such as phones, tablets or computer screens when spending time with their children. Khattar adds that parents need to themselves avoid being judgmental about others, situations and about themselves. "Children ape parents and thus learn to be judgmental in a situation, without being fully present to what is happening in front of them and enjoying the present," she says.

Besides, parents need to listen to their children and recognise the child's emotions. "For instance, if we say, you seem to be feeling bad—the child feels understood and releases his anxiety or else if indicated that nothing is wrong, he or she will suppress and might develop anxiety."

Dr Gohil says that mindfulness can be introduced, cultivated and practised from an early age itself, starting from simple things like listening to the bell or practising gratitude. "Parents should ask their kids to focus on breathing with the help of their favourite soft toy as the breathing buddy. Just ask them to lie down on the back with their buddy on the belly, this helps focus their attention on the rise and fall of the stuffed animal as they breathe in and out," she suggests.

According to Trinjhna, families trying to develop and maintain the habit should take holidays to places closer to natural beauty. "Beaches and hill stations are good choices where children can enjoy nature, learn about stillness and mindfulness by being present to the beauty in front of their eyes," she advises. "Also, indulge children in experiences that indulges all their five senses; rather than going to the mall for gaming, go to the beach, gardens, botanical or zoological parks."

Seeking professional help

There are a number of practitioners using play, arts-based and sand therapy to help build mindfulness in children. "It is suggested that parents should ensure the practitioner is a qualified one, preferably with training in child psychology to be most effective with their child for the long run," says Trinjhna. Ganeriwal says that since yoga and mindfulness are linked, a qualified yoga teacher can be sought to teach kids focused breathing techniques.



Parents should ask their kids to focus on breathing with the help of their favourite soft toy who can be their 'breathing buddy'

