

QUEENS

Family

Where Every Child Matters

December 2015

FREE



JOY

**Holiday gifts
and activities**

**Rosie O'Donnell's
crusade for kids'
arts education**

**Sharing your
knowledge
with the new
parents on
the block**



Find us online at www.NYParenting.com

WE KNOW THE MOMENTS...

The ones that define us
and give meaning to our lives.
The moments that make us breathe deeply
and then take our breath away...
the ones when having our health
makes everything possible.

This is what we're made of.

At Fidelis Care, we provide quality, affordable
health coverage for children and adults of all
ages and at all stages of life.

Compassion. Commitment. Community.

And a mission to always care for you
and the ones you love –
moment by moment.



FIDELIS CARE®

Quality health coverage. It's Our Mission.

Estimate Costs:

It only takes a minute to view product choices and estimate costs with the Fidelis Affordable Care Advisor at fideliscare.org/enroll

Meet with a Representative:

Call 1-888-FIDELIS to meet with a Representative or visit fideliscare.org/offices to find a community office close to you

1-888-FIDELIS (1-888-343-3547)

TTY: 1-800-421-1220

fideliscare.org



To learn more about applying for health insurance, including Child Health Plus and Medicaid through NY State of Health: The Official Health Plan Marketplace, visit www.nystateofhealth.ny.gov or call 1-855-355-5777.

Family December 2015



18

FEATURES

6 Protecting your child against HPV

The vaccine can make a huge difference

BY ALEXA BIGWARFE

8 Welcome to the neighborhood

Ten useful details for your new neighbors

BY SARA MARCHESSAULT

10 Silent nights

Helping kids sleep well during the holidays

BY MALIA JACOBSON

12 Delicious ideas

The perfect homemade gifts — for everyone on your list

BY MALIA JACOBSON

14 The hidden risks of antibiotics

BY DR. WILLIAM B. MILLER, JR.

17 Road risks

Distracted driving can be deadly. What kind of example are you setting?

BY KERRIE MCLOUGHLIN

18 Talk with your kids about cyberbullying

Tackling the new frontier in cruel teen behavior

BY SHNIEKA L. JOHNSON

20 On with the show!

How Rosie's Theater Kids gives children a moment in the spotlight

BY TAMMY SCILEPPI

24 What's the best emergency care?

Deciding between pediatrician vs. urgent care vs. the emergency room

BY JAMIE LOBER

26 Talking about touching

Yes, it can be embarrassing. But there are good reasons to talk to your children about masturbation

BY JAMIE LOBER



12



20

COLUMNS

16 Divorce & Separation

BY LEE CHABIN, ESQ.

22 Just Write Mom

BY DANIELLE SULLIVAN

34 Good Sense Eating

BY CHRISTINE M. PALUMBO, RD

CALENDAR

28 December Events

SPECIAL SECTIONS

33 The Marketplace



10

The end of another year approaches

Thanksgiving is over and so is the first of the big fabulous holiday meals. Now we have the December festivities and a month long of more festive eating to look forward to. We're very big on food at New York Parenting and in fact earlier in November sent out an e-blast to our subscribers with our staff member's memories of their favorite part of the Thanksgiving meal. It was so interesting to reminisce and to share family holidays of long ago.



We would welcome any of your family eating stories by the way, and any recipes you might want to share with our readers. Enough said about food, at least for now.

Why not become a subscriber to our newsletters? It's easy, you just log on NYParenting.com and enter your email.

We also have a number of articles and columns in this issue that address the pressures and realities of the December holidays from a parent point of view. But it's not strictly light weight. We like to approach all angles regarding the parenting experience in a big city like NYC and there are some serious articles as well that may be risk taking and provocative. Time will tell.

In addition, our calendar reflects the great events that are going on around town and without a doubt there are many of them. Of course!

This is New York! Every borough has great celebrations taking place throughout December. If you want to get the full picture, again, go to our website and see what's going on around the whole city.

A personal recommendation, if you've never been there before, and don't mind fighting the crowds, there are the amazingly decorated houses of Dyker Heights, Brooklyn. Every year they go all out to create a magical world in their community and truthfully one has to wonder how, between the lights, the crowds, and the noises of the displays themselves, they get any sleep in these weeks before the new year.

The end of the year is a great time to give thanks and I certainly do. Most of all I'm thankful for my family, great friends, and for good

health. I'm also grateful to have a job I enjoy and a staff of people to do it with who are all not only talented, but funny and entertaining. Thanks to our editorial staff, our art department, our distributors, and to our contributing writers. We are blessed to be able to do a job we can feel proud of at the end of the day. It is an honorable thing to be a parent and honorable for us too.

Happy holidays to all and thanks so much for reading.

Susan Weiss-Voskidis,
Publisher/Executive Editor
Susan@nyparenting.com

Community News Group

CEO: Les Goodstein
PRESIDENT & PUBLISHER: Jennifer Goodstein

New York Parenting

PUBLISHER / EXECUTIVE EDITOR:
Susan Weiss

PUBLISHER / BUSINESS MANAGER:
Clifford Luster

OPERATIONS ASSOCIATE:
Tina Felicetti

SALES REPS: Alexis Benson, Erin Brof, Jay Pelc, Stephanie Stellacio, Shanika Stewart

ART DIRECTOR: Leah Mitch

WEB DESIGNER: Sylvan Migdal

GRAPHIC DESIGNERS: Arthur Arutyunov, Daria Avvento, Gardy Charles, Raymond Cho, Yvonne Farley, Earl Ferrer, John Napoli

MANAGING EDITOR: Vince DiMiceli

ASSISTANT EDITOR: Courtney Donahue

COPY EDITORS: Lisa J. Curtiss, Shavana Abruzzo

CALENDAR EDITOR: Joanna Del Buono

Contact Information

ADVERTISING: WEB OR PRINT
(718) 260-4554
Susan@NYParenting.com

CIRCULATION
(718) 260-8336
Tina@NYParenting.com

EDITORIAL
(718) 260-4554
Family@NYParenting.com

CALENDAR
(718) 260-2523

ADDRESS
New York Parenting Media/CNG
1 Metrotech Center North
10th Floor
Brooklyn, NY 11201

www.NYParenting.com



The acceptance of advertising by New York Parenting does not constitute an endorsement of the products, services or information being advertised. We do not knowingly present any products or services that are fraudulent or misleading in nature.

Editorial inquiries, calendar information, advertising rates and schedules and subscription requests may be addressed to New York Parenting, One Metrotech Center North, 10th Floor, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201.

New York Parenting can also be reached by calling (718) 260-4554, emailing Family@NYParenting.com or by visiting our website, NYParenting.com.

Join the conversation on Facebook.

New York Parenting has been recognized for editorial and design excellence by PMA. New York Parenting is published monthly by New York Parenting Media/CNG. Subscription rate is \$35 annually. Reproduction of New York Parenting Media in whole or part without written permission from the publisher is prohibited. All rights reserved. Copyright©2015 Readership: 185,000. 2015 circulation audits by CVC.





Come to Bay Terrace for the following free events throughout the Holiday Season!

Visits with Santa & His Elf:

Saturday, December 5	10:00 am – 5:00 pm
Sunday, December 6	10:00 am – 5:00 pm
Saturday, December 12	10:00 am – 5:00 pm
Sunday, December 13	10:00 am – 5:00 pm
Saturday, December 19	10:00 am – 5:00 pm
Sunday, December 20	10:00 am – 5:00 pm

Menorah Lighting

Sunday, December 6 6:00 pm



Horse & Buggy Rides:

Sunday, December 6	10:00 am – 4 pm
Sunday, December 13	10:00 am – 4 pm
Sunday, December 20	10:00 am – 4 pm

THE BAY TERRACE
At Bayside



26th Avenue & Bell Boulevard • Bayside, NY 11360



SANTA'S
Workshop



Protecting your child against HPV

The vaccine can make a huge difference

BY ALEXA BIGWARFE

The human papilloma virus is a sexually transmitted infection that is so common, nearly every sexually active person will eventually contract one of the 40 types at some point in their lifetime. Yet, the vaccine is not always being enthusiastically recommended by doctors, despite the proven safety of the vaccine. Less than 42 percent of those eligible to receive the vaccine got it last year, and of those girls that received the first vaccination, less than a third of them received all three.

But here's the scary truth: the Center for Disease Control estimates that more than 80 million people in the United States have the virus, and another 14 million people will contract it in the next year. Even worse, more than 17,000 women and 9,000

men will develop cancers caused by it in a given year.

Why should you talk to your doctor about human papilloma virus vaccinations for your teen or tween?

It's so common: This virus is incredibly prevalent, with more than 40 strains that cause a variety of issues, from genital warts to cervical, anal, penile, and oral cancers. In some cases, it will go away on its own. However, not generally so in the strains that cause cancer.

It's safe: The vaccine has been tested and proven to be safe. More importantly, immunization can significantly reduce rates of human papilloma virus-related cancers later in life for women and men. The Center for Disease Control estimates the US could reduce 50,000 cases of cervical cancer if the vaccination rate of girls rose to 80 percent. As with all vaccines, some people should

not get the vaccine. Be sure to read the vaccine information sheet for more information. (www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/vis/vis-statements/hpv-gardasil.pdf)

Boys benefit, too: Recent studies show men benefit indirectly when girls are immunized. Boys still need the immunization to prevent them from developing related cancers, but an increase in girls vaccinated would actually help in the reduction of related cancers. A study by the Dutch in May 2015 provided statistical data predicting how cancer levels would change if more girls and boys are vaccinated. An increase in the vaccination of girls (at a rate of 90 percent vaccinated girls) would reduce the number of related cancers in men by about 37 percent. The numbers would drop even more drastically if more boys receive the vaccination.

The risk of cervical cancer: The overwhelming amount of related cancers in adults is cervical cancer. The Center for Disease Control recommends girls ages 11 to 12 get the vaccine to help prevent cervical cancer.

So many human papilloma virus-related issues can be prevented if parents and doctors are talking about the vaccination and starting the vaccination program when their children are 11 or 12 years old. According to the Centers for Disease Control, the goal of the vaccine program is to prevent infection of the cancer causing strains of human papilloma virus. To do this, it's necessary to immunize teens and tweens before they become sexually active.

The United States has three vaccines available: Cervarix, Gardasil, and Gardasil 9. The vaccine program includes a series of three shots over six months. Data from research shows that Gardasil and Gardasil 9 have been shown to protect against genital warts and anal cancer in both men and women.

More information for you and your tween/teen on the HPV vaccine:

- <http://www.cdc.gov/hpv/>
- <http://www.gardasil.com/hpv-and-your-child/what-is-hpv/>
- <http://www.cancercenter.com/cervical-cancer/cervical-cancer-vaccine/>

Alexa Bigwarfe is a freelance writer and mother of three children. Her area of expertise is infant and children's health topics.

SOURCES: Karen Canfell, D.Phil., director, cancer research division, Cancer Council NSW, Sydney, Australia; Dr. Hans Bogaards, research scientist, National Institute for Public Health and the Environment, Bilthoven, the Netherlands; May 12, 2015, BMJ, online.



laugh • learn • explore

718.838.9243 213-54 35th Ave
7:30am-6:30pm Bayside, NY 11361
www.littleapplepreschool.com

At Little Apple Preschool, we believe that an early education is key to **Social, Cognitive, and Emotional Success** for a child. We provide a well-rounded creative curriculum that will allow your child to flourish in things that he/she innately knows with the guidance of **NYS Certified Teachers!**

Enrichment Program:

DANCE • YOGA • MUSIC • ART • INDOOR GYM

SPECIAL PROMOTION:

**ENROLL NOW THROUGH JANUARY AND RECEIVE
\$200 OFF THE FIRST TWO MONTHS TUITION**



Infants



Toddlers



Preschool

**MAT
Certified**

**Age-Specific Classrooms • Potty Training • Small Ratios
Gifted and Talented Program Available**

**Meals
Included**



Welcome to the neighborhood

Ten useful details for your new neighbors

BY SARA MARCHESSAULT

Once you have kids, moving can be hard. If your kids are several years old, and you've lived in the same place since they were born, you had time to find the perfect medical care, preschool, favorite parks, grocery stores, and

coffee shops that are kid friendly.

U.S. Census Bureau data shows that couples with young children are the most likely demographic to move. It makes sense. Kids and careers tend to grow alongside each other as parents work hard both in and out of the home.

The challenge is that with a move

to a new city, we might not have the luxury of exploring lots of options before making choices. Schools have to be selected. In many cases, families need childcare quickly. In all cases, families need to know a few basic things about their new city: where are the parks, grocery stores, and kid-friendly restaurants?

Newcomers can spend hours perusing the internet for resources available in their new neighborhood. After spending all of that time researching schools, doctors, and pediatricians, new parents still might not get the answers they really want. That's because the surface-level information that we can find online is a helpful place to get started, but there is nothing like talking face-to-face with people who know the community resources.

The surface-level information that we can find online is a helpful place to get started, but there is nothing like talking face-to-face with people who know the community resources.

The next time you're at the playground or a school event, and you meet a family that's new to your city, here are 10 pieces of information you can share with them that are both great conversation pieces and could be immensely helpful to them:

Pediatrician info. Not just the most popular pediatrician; the pediatrician with the shortest wait times. Or the office with a separate waiting room for sick kids.

Groceries. Some families are on the lookout for specialty products. You can help them out by letting them know where and when they can find farmers' markets or health food stores that carry specialty products and options for kids with food allergies.

Playtime. Where are the best playgrounds? What playground is next to an ice cream stand? Or a place they can grab lunch? What playground has something unexpected close by? It absolutely happens that a website might highlight a fun playground, but what it doesn't mention is that the playground is right next to a lake or beach. Parents like to know these things before they head out for playtime.

Preschool. A lot of families will want to know what the best preschools are for getting kids ready for kindergarten. What some newcomers might find valuable to know is which preschools are the ones where the kids learn through play all day long. Where are the kids making art and cooking?

Sports. Where are the places that kids are going to learn a sport with a level of intensity that prepares them for competitive sports as they grow? Alternatively, where are the organizations that are more focused on kids having fun?

Schools. It can be frustrating for

parents to arrive in a new city and have people tell them how great the schools are, but not back it up with any details. A new parent is looking for reasons to get excited about the schools and appreciates hearing specifics about why you like it.

Weather wise. If the new family has recently changed climates, like moved from a hot place to a cold place, mom and dad want to know what they need to survive. Instead of telling them to get ready for the winter, let them know what they will need to buy and when they'll need it, so that they are literally not left out in the cold.

Family-friendly places. Many parents of young children face challenges with going out to eat, shopping, or enjoying activities in public, such as movies. Your new neighbors will appreciate knowing the names of the places where kids can be kids. Is there a restaurant that has so much background noise that it doesn't matter how loud the kids are? A movie theater that runs specials for kids on certain days?

Kid-friendly coffee shops. Sometimes mom and dad just want to head out to grab a bagel and a coffee. Where can they bring the kids? What are the places that won't mind if the kids run around and which places (if any) should they save for adult-only time?

Gym or fitness center with reliable childcare. Lots of gyms offer childcare. Which one in your city staffs the childcare with employees who will play with and engage your children? Which one hires high school students that are allowed to play on their phones while they are with your kids?

When families move, what they really need is a sense of community and an opportunity to build new relationships. Mom and dad need new friends just as much as the kids do. People they can share dinner or play dates with or even just someone to meet up with for a drink. Being the person who moves is hard. Finding people in your new city who are welcoming and willing to share information and resources can make it a whole lot easier.

Sara Marchessault is a writer, life coach, and dedicated diarist. She is 110 percent dedicated to helping her clients and readers create a life full of joy. These days, journals are getting lots of details about playing with her kids and the awesome ups and downs of being a mom. Learn more about her work at saramarchessault.com.



Health care is about you. So are we.

Staying in good health means:

- Being there for life's important moments
- Having health care you can afford and
- Getting the care you need when you need it

With Essential Plan coverage through Empire BlueCross BlueShield HealthPlus, we'll help you:

- See the right doctor
- Get checkups and preventive care, plus prescription drugs
- Talk to a nurse 24/7, if you need to

We also offer dental and vision care and over-the-counter drugs, if you qualify.

Empire BlueCross BlueShield HealthPlus. Quality health care that's all about you.

Choose Essential Plan from Empire today!

Call 1-888-809-8009 (TTY 711).

www.empireblue.com/nyessentialplan

Empire 
BLUECROSS BLUESHIELD

An Anthem Company

Visit NY State of Health, The Official Health Plan Marketplace, at nystateofhealth.ny.gov or call 1-855-355-5777.

Empire BlueCross BlueShield HealthPlus is the trade name of HealthPlus, LLC, an independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association.

ENYMKT-0063-15 10.15

Silent nights

Helping kids
sleep well
during the
holidays

BY MALIA JACOBSON

Parents' holiday wishes are simple: children tucked snug in bed, dreaming of sugar plums. But for families with small children, the winter holidays aren't always sleep-friendly. From late-night parties and holiday travel to school performances and visiting relatives, the holiday season is packed with sleep disruptions. Unfortunately, this can leave children tired and cranky during holiday celebrations — just when parents are looking forward to relaxed family time.

Happily, parents can support sounder sleep during this hectic time of year, and doing so can make the holidays more enjoyable for all family members, says Dr. Charles Shubin, pediatrician with the University of Maryland Medical Center in Baltimore. Read on for age-appropriate tips to keep holiday nights silent and restful, so kids can enjoy a merry season:

Tuckered-out traveler

When holiday travel spans the nighttime hours, plan ahead for a smooth bedtime on the airplane or in the car. An on-the-go bedtime routine should mimic your child's at-home bedtime routine, Dr. Michael Hobaugh, president of



the medical staff at La Rabida Children's Hospital in Chicago, says. Familiar bedtime rituals serve as cues for sleep, easing a child into peaceful slumber.

"Bring a child's regular pajamas, toothbrush, storybooks, and anything else used in the bedtime routine at home," Hobaugh says. "On an airplane, go to the bathroom and brush teeth and wash up, and read bedtime stories as usual. This

serves as a transition to bedtime and helps children understand that it's time to sleep."

Sleepy scene

Similarly, if a holiday trip has your family sleeping at a hotel or relative's home, create a familiar sleep scene for your child by bringing a few bedroom elements from home, like a special blanket, pillow, nightlight, even a special framed

Travel means new faces and new places, which can equal stress and poor sleep for little ones; surrounding a child with familiar comforts at bedtime reduces the stress of travel and helps children fall asleep more quickly — and wake less often.

photo for the nightstand. Children crave routine and familiarity, says Shubin.

Travel means new faces and new places, which can equal stress and poor sleep for little ones; surrounding a child with familiar comforts at bedtime reduces the stress of travel and helps children fall asleep more quickly and wake less often.

Cabin fever

Don't expect children to bed down easily at night when they've spent the day cooped up in a vehicle or airplane, particularly if they've been napping during the trip, says Hobaugh. Kids need around 60 minutes of physical activity per day to help prepare for restful sleep at night.

Take every opportunity to let kids burn off energy en-route: walk up and down airplane aisles, do a loop around the airport terminal when switching planes, and on car trips, stop at a rest stop and allow kids a 15-minute play break every 90 minutes.

Comfort cues

When kids sleep fitfully in the winter, check the temperature. During the winter, bedrooms are flooded with stale, dry, overheated air — this is especially true in hotel rooms — and parents often dress children in footed fleece pajamas, pile on warm blankets, and dial up the heater in an attempt to keep kids cozy at night. This can backfire, because sleeping in a room that's too hot can result in poor-quality sleep and nightmares; per the National Sleep Foundation, sleeping in an overheated bedroom is a contributing factor in Sudden Infant Death Syndrome.

The ideal temperature for sleep is on the cooler side: around 20-degrees Celsius or 68-degrees Fahrenheit. Dry, heated air can worsen coughing and snoring; some children may benefit from

a bedroom humidifier to ease nighttime breathing.

Bedtime bend

Attending a long-awaited holiday party that you don't want your child to miss? It's okay to bend bedtime rules on special occasions, says Dr. Gary Feldman, medical director of the Stramski Developmental Center at Miller Children's Hospital in Long Beach, California.

"It's not fair to ask children to miss out on the excitement of the holidays, but you don't want them to stay awake to the point of exhaustion, either," he says. Keep the party fun for all, and a child's daily routine intact, by altering a child's bedtime slightly without completely disregarding it.

For children under 10, set a "party" bedtime up to an hour later than a child's normal bedtime. Bend bedtime by two hours or more, and you may be asking for a meltdown.

Morning after

When children stay up later than normal, parents may be tempted to let them "sleep it off" the following morning, says Hobaugh. But allowing children to sleep in hours later than normal can throw off that night's bedtime, resulting in a routine that's off-kilter for days.

The morning after an exciting holiday party, let children sleep in up to 30 minutes later than normal, and accept that they'll be tired that day. Plan for an appropriately early bedtime that evening; a good night's sleep will help children bounce back from party-induced over-tiredness quickly — and help everyone enjoy all the season has to offer.

Malia Jacobson is an award-winning health and parenting journalist and mom of three. Her latest book is "Sleep Tight, Every Night: Helping Toddlers and Preschoolers Sleep Well Without Tears, Tricks, or Tirades."



DISTRICT 28 MAGNET SCHOOLS

THE NYC DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION MAGNET SCHOOLS ARE SCHOOLS OF CHOICE OFFERING DISTINCT, INNOVATIVE, THEMATIC LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUR CHILD. EACH FEDERALLY FUNDED MAGNET SCHOOL OFFERS SPECIALIZED CURRICULUM ALIGNED TO THE SCHOOL THEME WITH STUDENT ACTIVITIES DESIGNED TO PROMOTE ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE. APPLICATIONS ARE AVAILABLE FOR ALL STUDENTS, GRADES PRE-K THROUGH 5.

OPEN HOUSE DATES

THURGOOD MARSHALL MAGNET SCHOOL OF MULTIMEDIA & COMMUNICATION	171-05 137 AVENUE, JAMAICA, NY 11434	
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2015	5:30 P.M. - 7:30 P.M.	
TUESDAY, JANUARY 19, 2016	5:30 P.M. - 7:30 P.M.	
TUESDAY, MARCH 15, 2016	5:30 P.M. - 7:30 P.M.	
TUESDAY, APRIL 19, 2016	5:30 P.M. - 7:30 P.M.	

STEM (SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING AND MATH) MAGNET INSTITUTE OF QUEENS	126-10 BEDELL STREET, JAMAICA, NY 11434	
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2015	6:00 P.M. - 8:00 P.M.	
TUESDAY, JANUARY 19, 2016	6:00 P.M. - 8:00 P.M.	
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2016	6:00 P.M. - 8:00 P.M.	
TUESDAY, MARCH 22, 2016	6:00 P.M. - 8:00 P.M.	
TUESDAY, APRIL 19, 2016	6:00 P.M. - 8:00 P.M.	

WALTER FRANCIS BISHOP MAGNET SCHOOL OF THE ARTS	109-59 INWOOD STREET, JAMAICA, NY 11435	
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2015	9:00 A.M. - 10:30 A.M. & 5:00 P.M. - 7:30 P.M.	
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 13, 2016	9:00 A.M. - 10:30 A.M. & 5:00 P.M. - 7:30 P.M.	
FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2016	9:00 A.M. - 10:30 A.M. & 5:00 P.M. - 7:30 P.M.	

NEW MAGNET SCHOOLS ARE OPEN FOR ENROLLMENT. TO TOUR THE SCHOOLS AND LEARN MORE ABOUT THE ENROLLMENT PROCESS, PLEASE ATTEND AN OPEN HOUSE OR CALL 718.759.4977

Pappas Pediatric Dentistry



Warm child friendly environment

TV/DVD in waiting room and operatories

Turn Your Child's Dental Visit Into A Fun Experience

Come Pet the Friendly Dinosaur

- Convenient afternoon and Saturday Appointments
- Nitrous oxide (laughing gas) analgesia
- 30+ years experience
- Accepting many insurances as full or partial payment
- Digital radiography
- Zoom Bleaching (for our older patients)

Despina Pappas D.D.S. Elayne Pappas D.D.S.
215-41 23rd Road Bayside, NY 11360
718 224-0443

Delicious ideas

The perfect homemade gifts — for everyone on your list

BY MALIA JACOBSON

Making a homemade holiday gift is a fun way to get kids involved in gift-giving — but finding the perfect handmade present can be tougher than last year's fruitcake. If your list includes some hard-to-please folks, and you're running low on time and creativity, don't throw in the towel. Instead, choose from this collection of culinary gifts for everyone on your list. These tasty treats are thoughtful, easy on the wallet, and usually come together in less time than it takes to go the mall. Give them a try, and you'll be rewarded with heartfelt thanks and cherished family memories.

The foodie: Herbed salts

Give the gourmet in your life the gift of perfectly seasoned meals. Make an herb salt blend by mixing one part crushed or ground herbs and five parts salt. For cumin, marjoram, or thyme salts, use ground herbs; for others, such as basil or rosemary, let kids help crush the herbs with a mortar and pestle or a rolling pin. Use single herbs, or experiment with different combinations.

Pour the finished mixture into a salt-shaker, and be sure to label your custom blend.

The snow bunny: Hot cocoa mix with marshmallows

Send warm wishes to friends and family in cold climates with this charming chocolaty twosome. Whip up a dry hot cocoa mix and combine it with powdery, fluffy homemade marshmallows (locate recipes online).

Package the cocoa in a small tin, and seal the marshmallows in a plastic bag if they'll be shipped. Add a large cocoa mug for an extra-thoughtful touch. Kids will love making and tasting this sweet pair of treats, but be warned: once they taste hot cocoa perfection, they may not go back to the store-bought stuff.

The film buff: Popcorn and homemade seasoning mix

Cold weather calls for cozy movie

nights at home, so give your favorite film fanatic a couch-worthy snack. Begin by filling a large mason jar to the top with bulk popcorn kernels and fastening the lid. Next, have kids help prepare the seasoning mix and scoop it into small mason jars.

To finish, tie the pair of jars off with twine or ribbon, and present with a new DVD or a popcorn bowl. Try this sweet-and-salty combo: mix a quarter cup sugar with one teaspoon each of ground cinnamon and ground salt.

The coffee connoisseur: Vanilla bean syrup

Treat a coffee-lover to homemade vanilla syrup that will add layers of flavor to her morning java. This project is best for older kids, who will be fascinated by the funny-looking vanilla bean and the aromatic flecks inside.

First, bring one cup water to a boil. Once the water is boiling, add one to two cups of sugar (more sugar will yield a thicker syrup) along with the vanilla bean and stir constantly until

the sugar dissolves. Remove the pan from the heat and allow the syrup to cool. Take out the vanilla bean, and pour the syrup into a glass jar with a tight-fitting lid. In addition to flavoring coffee, this sweet concoction can be added to sparkling water, lemonade, cocktails, or poured over ice cream or yogurt.

The calorie-counter: Infused vinegars

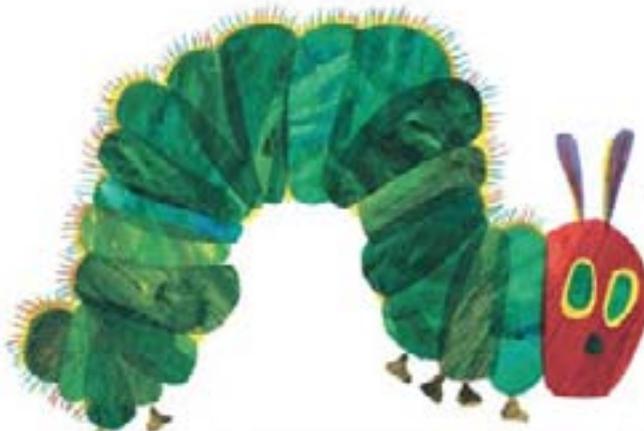
With sugary treats as far as the eye can see, the holiday season can be trying for those on restricted diets. Herb-infused vinegars make an attractive gift that fits anyone's diet plan. To start, scout discount stores and craft stores for pretty glass bottles. Remove the bottles' lids and insert herbs from your garden or the grocery store.

Using a small funnel, pour in warmed (not hot) distilled white vinegar and seal the lid with hot wax. Some combinations to try: oregano, thyme, and basil; lemon balm, nasturtium, and dill; and sage, thyme, basil, and rosemary.

Malia Jacobson is an award-winning health and parenting journalist and mom of three. Her latest book is "Sleep Tight, Every Night: Helping Toddlers and Preschoolers Sleep Well Without Tears, Tricks, or Tirades."



JANUARY 30 - MARCH 27



THE VERY
HUNGRY
CATERPILLOR[™]
SHOW

CREATED BY JONATHAN ROCKEFELLER BASED ON ERIC CARLE'S BOOKS

47th Street Theatre 304 West 47th Street (between 8th and 9th Aves.) **TC** TicketCentral.com
HUNGRYCATERPILLARSHOW.COM



**Stephanie Buck-Haskin,
MD, FACOG**

Dr. Stephanie Buck-Haskin enhances the high level of care provided to her patient population by sharing her individual brand of medical and surgical expertise.

Obstetrics and Gynecology:

- Evaluation and treatment of gynecologic health concerns
- Hysterectomy options and alternatives
- Menopause wellness, perimenopause
- Personalized obstetrics
- In-office ultrasound, and bloodwork for your comfort and convenience
- Procedure room, colposcopy, LEEP, Procedures, Ablation.

62-54 97th Pl., Rego Park, NY 11374 || **40-08 Forley St., Elmhurst, NY 11373**
(718) 263-2986 || **(718) 396-3241**



The hidden risks of antibiotics

BY DR. WILLIAM B. MILLER, JR.

The discovery of the antibacterial activity of penicillin by Alexander Fleming in 1929 represents one of the singular moments in human history. The number of lives saved is beyond calculation. Medicine was revolutionized by that discovery.

The success of antibiotics is based upon their ability to interfere

with a bacterial growth, metabolism, or reproduction. The manner in which they work means that many types of bacteria are affected at the same time by any particular antibiotic, which is termed “broad spectrum.”

Antibiotics are often miraculous and life saving, but people need to be aware that the use of them has negative effects.

Deep associations between gut

microbial composition and diabetes and obesity are now being discovered. A recent surprise has been strong evidence between the administration of antibiotics and increasing childhood obesity lasting into and through adulthood. It appears that the more antibiotics you get as a child, the stronger the effect. The antibiotics seem to be wiping out beneficial populations of gut bacteria and replacing them with others that are less so. The possibility that this might also link to the increasing incidence of Type II diabetes is being further explored.

Antibiotic resistance

In the last few decades, the problem of antibiotic resistance has become an increasingly reported clinical experience. Some antibiotics that had been effective against a certain type of bacterial infection have become less so, requiring a higher dosage or more prolonged treatment. In some cases, they might now demonstrate near complete ineffectiveness against a bacterial strain against which they had been highly potent previously.

What led to this unexpected outcome? Commonly, it is stated that the bacteria have mutated in response to antibiotics. However, that is largely incorrect. Antibiotic resistance is ancient. All common antibiotics are based on chemicals found in nature and used by other organisms to ward off bacteria. Over eons and long ago, bacteria themselves evolved to counter this form of defense by developing resistance to those defenses. What is occurring in our modern era is that our current antibiotic resistance is leading to an increase in the number of naturally resistant bacteria that become more common within bacterial populations. It is, in essence, a form of selective breeding for bacteria, for the wrong type.

Part of the problem is the pressure felt by physicians to offer antibiotics to their patients. The belief in the power of antibiotics can be very high among patients who are suffering. Many times, even though the treating physician might assume that it will not be effective, the default can be towards satisfying that demand with the consideration that “no harm will be done.”

The danger of overuse

What we are now learning is that this attitude has been an incor-

A recent surprise has been strong evidence between the administration of antibiotics and increasing childhood obesity lasting into and through adulthood.

rect assumption. There are other forms of inadvertent harm beyond antibiotic resistance that can occur and these directly relate to the "broad spectrum" capacity of almost all antibiotics. Since they are active against many bacterial types, there is the suppression or eradication of many populations of bacteria at the same time, apart from the specific pathogenic bacterial type that is actually being targeted.

When antibiotics are used improperly, the critical balance of many essential bacterial partners in our body tissues is being upset. We do this every time we overuse antibiotics by administering them for the wrong indication.

Permitting their use in our food supply compounds these types of errors.

Crucial microbial cells

This enlarged understanding stems from the fact that all creatures on this planet, including humans, are actually vast collaborations between microbial cells, viruses, and our own innate cells. In fact, for us humans, microbial cells outnumber our own cells by more than 10 to one and are present in all of our body tissues. So when an antibiotic is administered for the wrong reasons, an exquisite balance between an enormous array of microbes and our own cells is being altered for no productive reason.

These partnerships between the microbial realm and our own cells serve vital purposes in our health.

The range of that interaction can be very surprising. They are intimately connected with our growth and development, metabolism, and even our neurological function and moods.

What happens then if there is

a breakdown of these crucial microbial partnerships? It is now known that there are very significant consequences. This has become a well-recognized issue, termed "dysbiosis."

There are now a wide range of examples of these types of effects. An increasing number of diseases are now either being directly attributed to dysbiosis or linked to them. For example, the incidence and intensity of inflammatory bowel disease is now known to be associated with intestinal dysbiosis. Cases of a particularly nasty gut pathogen, *Clostridium difficile*, are now being actively treated by re-establishing the proper balance of the intestinal flora. Not surprisingly then, antibiotics use is now considered to be one risk factor for the incidence of both of these conditions.

It has been shown that the incidence of both childhood and adult allergy and asthma is on the rise and some research suggests that this, too, is related to antibiotic exposure.

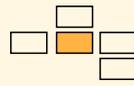
Other reports suggest associations between dysbiosis and other extra-intestinal diseases such as autism, schizophrenia, rheumatoid arthritis, colorectal cancer, and even a tentative association with breast cancer.

Use with caution

What should we do with this new information? Clearly, despite some risks, antibiotics remain essential wonders of our modern medical palette. However, their use should be carefully tailored by physicians for only strict indications.

Patients and parents must be willing to accept that antibiotics should not be reflexively requested for many infectious illnesses. And surely, the use of antibiotics in our food supply should be very carefully regulated and restricted.

Dr. Bill Miller has been a physician in academic and private practice for more than 30 years. He is the author of "The Microcosm Within: Evolution and Extinction in the Hologenome." He currently serves as a scientific advisor to OmniBiome Therapeutics, a pioneering company in discovering and developing solutions to problems in human fertility and health through management of the human microbiome. For more information visit, www.themicrocosmwithin.com.

 Kimmy Ma ARTStudio


*Enjoy Creative Spirit
and Best Wishes in this Holiday Season!*

**Enroll Now - January 20th
for the NEW Session!!!
New Season begins 01/24/2016**

Comic/Cartooning Workshop:

Explore comic fundamentals & design characters,
layout and settings, storytelling
SUNDAY Comic 2:30-4

Fine Arts Programs:

Medium based curriculum & ability level
instructions. Explore illustration, charcoal,
pastel, watercolor & paintings

Young Beginner (age 6-7-8)

Mon 4:15-5:45; Sun 9:15-10:45 & Sun 11-12:30

Beginner Artist Program:

Sat 3:45-5:15 (age 7-11) & Sun 12:45-2:15 (age 9-HS)

Young Artist I (age 9+): T/W/TH 3:30-5:30

Young Artist II (skill assertive learners):

Fri 3:30-6:30 & Sat. 3-hr. classes (9-12, 12-3)

Download detailed curriculum in fine arts or in comics

Kimmyma-artstudio.com

190-19 UNION TURNPIKE FRESH MEADOW, NY 11364

646-209-9352



DIVORCE & SEPARATION

LEE CHABIN, ESQ.

A powerful message for divorcing parents

“In custody battles ... children lose.”

So begins the trailer (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pv-DaOkQP7o>) for “Talk to Strangers,” a film that “tells the story of a sister and her younger brother struggling to navigate the child custody evaluation process typically used in family courts throughout the United States,” according to the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers.

The trailer starts with a shot of a courthouse in winter. A few seconds later, there is another shot of the courthouse, with a statue of parents sitting next to each other in the foreground. Each parent has an arm around the other, and together they hold their young child; they appear to be a loving couple not at all bothered by the snow on the ground.

Next, we are in the courthouse, observing parents whose words, tone of voice, and body language tell us that they are anything but together.

Powerfully depicting the ordeal from the point of view of the children, “Talk to Strangers,” written and directed by Larry Sarezky, is unique and serves as a cautionary message to parents and lawyers on the brink of traumatic child custody battles.

Accompanying the film is a guide written by Sarezky with contributions from the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers, a prominent organization, to help parents avoid those battles and other high-conflict divorces.

“This film is undeniably moving and offers an invaluable portrayal of the ways in which a custody battle directly impacts children who are caught in the middle,” said James T. McLaren, president of the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers. “It is truly one of the most powerful tools I have seen that can encourage parents and professionals to pause and more thoughtfully consider how custody battles affect children.”

The Academy says professionals in the United States and abroad are already using the film, as are cer-



tain public and private institutions. It is being screened by “law schools nationwide,” which offers the hope that matrimonial and family lawyers will be more aware of and sensitive to the emotional damage that often result from custody battles.

Additionally, the film “is scheduled to be in service throughout the Massachusetts family court system at the beginning of next year,” said McLaren.

The more people who are exposed to the movie’s message, the better.

Some parents who think — or who try to convince themselves — that fighting it out in court won’t have much of an impact on their kids may well make different choices after watching this 25-minute film.

Similarly, a lawyer who has represented one parent against another in nasty child-custody cases, never having raised the issue of the harm that children may suffer due to these battles, may have a harder time ignoring the question after seeing the film.

Imagine how many more parents would think twice, and then a third time, before deciding to litigate custody questions, if lots of other parents and the lawyer at a consultation

for the divorce were to tell them, “a custody battle is probably going to cause your children harm; and, it wouldn’t be pleasant for you either. Some people have to engage in a bruising court fight; but, maybe you’re not one of them. What about trying a different approach to begin with? If it doesn’t work, you can litigate it then.”

I’ve only seen the trailer for “Talk to Strangers,” and cannot fairly critique the film, but if its hugely important message resonates with parents and others, it will be a big success.

If Sarezky’s efforts interest you, you may want to read my blog post titled “Considering a custody battle? Ask yourself — and your spouse or partner — the following” at <http://bit.ly/1QfSFId>.

New York City and Long Island-based divorce mediator and collaborative divorce lawyer Lee Chabin helps clients end their relationships respectfully and without going to court. Contact him at lee_chabin@lc-mediate.com, (718) 229-6149, or go to <http://lc-mediate.com/>. Follow him on Facebook at www.facebook.com/lchabin.

Disclaimer: All material in this column is for informational purposes only and does not constitute legal advice.

Road risks

Distracted driving can be deadly. What kind of example are *you* setting?

BY KERRIE MCMCLOUGHLIN

We hear all the time about teens getting into a car crash because they were texting while driving. We've seen the heartbreaking public service announcements about a teen's last text before running down a pedestrian. Teens get such a bad rap for texting and driving, yet I see so many adults who are driving while trying to dial a phone number, texting, putting on makeup, holding their pet — often with small children in the backseat. What are we teaching our children and teens about distracted driving?

So many of us are multitaskers by nature. Everyone is busy, and some of us are in our car more often than we would like to be. It's tempting to want to pop off a quick text message to let someone know you are running late. It's easy to make a fast phone call to the doctor's office from the car to ask a question you might forget about by the time you get home. And we have to check in with work, don't we?

According to Distraction.gov, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's website, "Distracted driving is any activity that could divert a person's attention away from the primary task of driving. All distractions endanger driver, passenger, and bystander safety. These types of distractions include: texting; using a cellphone or smartphone; eating and drinking; talking to passengers; grooming; reading, including maps; using a navigation system; watching a video; adjusting a radio, CD player, or MP3 player."

So how do you keep your teenager from texting or talking on her cellphone while driving? For starters, you have to be a good example. A teenager recently told me her mother drives with her knee while applying lipstick



and talking on the phone at the same time. It's possible that observing a bad example will make this teenager go the opposite way; maybe not.

One mom I know says, "Oh I'm horrible — I text, but with my voice app more now. I always put on makeup in the car. It's a horrible habit I have, I'm a terrible example; in fact, I have talked to [my kids] a lot about what I do [that] they shouldn't."

Another option is to get a cool app to help you out. Privus Mobile® is a Dallas-based application developer that has come up with a caller ID app that says out loud who a text is from. This way, a person can decide to ignore the text or to pull off to the side of the road to check the text or answer it. With this app, drivers won't have to look at their phone to see who is sending a text and then try to read it and respond while driving. To learn more about this app to help end texting while driving, go to <http://privus-mobile.com/eyesontheroad>.

Realize that being late to your destination is better than not arriving at all, because you had to do last-minute things in your car, instead of at home, and you caused an accident. Thinking, "I can just call or text my friend back while I'm driving the kids to dance class" could be deadly and is something you can make a note

about and do later.

Keep track of when your child is driving places and check it against the phone bill to see if there were any calls or texts during that time. If it turns out your child is practicing distracted driving, decide on the consequences, such as taking away driving or other privileges, etc.

More ideas include:

- Keep snacks and bottles of water in the car for the kids to get into if they need them instead of you digging around for them and passing them back.

- Pull over to soothe your baby instead of reaching back and trying to get a pacifier or bottle in his mouth.

- Rather than adjusting the radio or CD player endlessly, leave it where it is or turn it off entirely.

- Stow your phone somewhere in the car where you can't reach it and won't be tempted to answer it. Turning it off is also a good idea, so you won't hear the ringing or dinging of it and get stressed out thinking it might be something urgent. Even using a headset is not necessarily safer, as your mind is still focused on the phone call and not on the road.

Kerrie McLoughlin is the mom of five and author of "Fun, Frugal and Green Christmas." Come and see her at The-KerrieShow.com.

Talk with your kids about cyberbullying

Tackling the
new frontier
in cruel
behavior
among teens

BY SHNIEKA L. JOHNSON

The advances that have occurred over the past five years in the design and creativity of online platforms offered — whether used on a computer, tablet, or cellphone — is staggering. There are a number of benefits to social media, and it is a way of life for many teens. In fact, for the first time, there is a generation that has not experienced a world without the internet. This constant access to the internet is not only used for research and chatting with friends, it is also used for harm.

Teens now find their personal relationships and their actions being exploited online for the world to see by peers. As a result, many teens (and their parents) are left wondering how best to handle cyberbullying.

Before the internet, bullying often occurred on the playground, in the hallways, or on the school bus — all places that an adult is present and can assess a situation quite quickly with notification. Now, this same type of bullying behavior has spread to the greater public via the web, mostly on social media.

In many instances, the adults that could easily monitor face-to-face bullying or verbal teasing are not as knowledgeable of social media, and therefore, cannot successfully identify, monitor, or deter this behavior.

“According to a lot of different data, and depending on age and gender, it looks like young people are getting a mix of phone and text cyberbullying as well as on social media, and likely in tandem with these forms of communication,” says Yoko Liriano, director of Citywide Teen Programs at the YMCA of Greater New York.

Like bullying, cyberbullying occurs amongst school-aged children

typically entering or in the midst of adolescence (e.g., pre-teens and teens) and involves a power imbalance between peers. Kids who are bullied are intimidated by the use of power — such as physical strength, knowledge of embarrassing information, or simple popularity. The bully uses that power imbalance over time and in different situations to control a situation or hurt the other victim’s feelings, which can include a combination of in-person bullying and cyberbullying.

“Cyberbullying is a type of bullying, but it is done via social media in the form of comments and damaging pictures, texting, or using any type of communication device to perpetuate the bullying,” Liriano says. “I would venture to say that the effects of cyberbullying are more lasting than most physical bullying, because anything done on the internet is on the internet forever.”

This bullying behavior is repeated over time and can occur during or after school hours. Cyberbullying typically occurs among young people, but there are instances in which the person on the other side of the computer or device is an adult.

When an adult is involved, this type of conduct — which is often referred to as cyber-harassment or cyberstalking — there are potential for legal consequences. In all forms of cyberbullying, it can include harassment, threats, and embarrassment.

So how can parents protect their children? Pre-teens and teens are socializing online and using mobile devices at a greater rate than ever before, so it is hopeless to attempt banning access, especially as these tools become more integrated with typical personal and school interactions. Because cyberbullying can negatively affect a person’s self-im-

age and behavior, one of the best steps to counter these consequences is to provide positive in-person interaction with adults and peers, which can reduce the negative impact of cyberbullying.

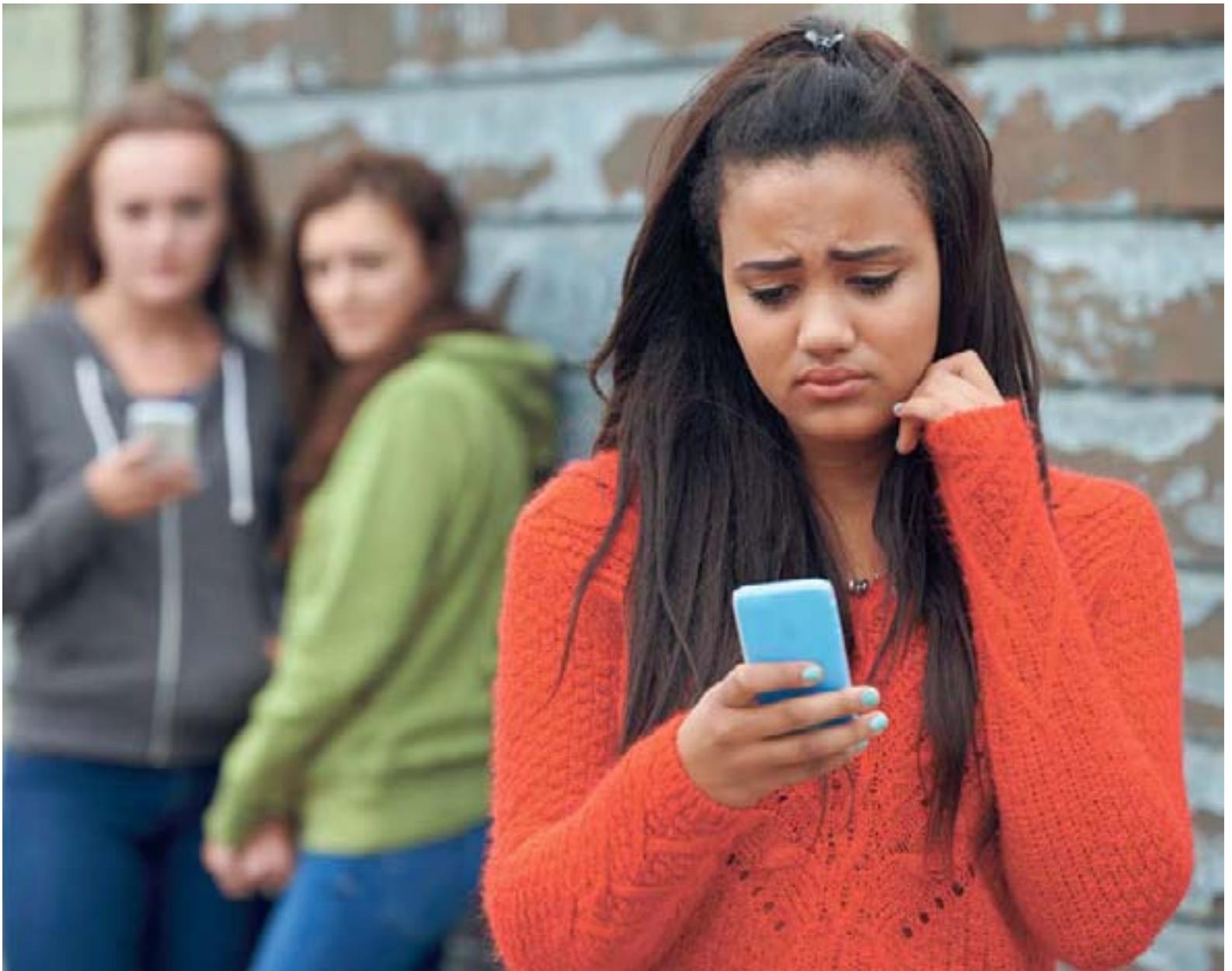
“I would say that we want our young people to feel like we trust them, because we do. Being ‘Big Brother’ could push teens away. Practice being on social media WITH young people — befriend them on Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, or whatever they are using. Ask them to help you with social media, so it feels like you are learning together. Make it a family affair!” says Liriano.

As parents, we are often protective, but early on, we must let our children take the lead.

“I am a firm believer that young people should be shown how to work out conflicts between each other first,” says Liriano. “[To prevent bullying from being] pervasive in a school setting, most school administrations have strict policies against cyberbullying. Depending on the severity, the police may also be notified and brought into the situation. The more we work on building strong relationships and strengthening our communities, the less likely cyberbullying will occur. Let’s start there.”

If you suspect that your child is the victim of cyberbullying, the first step is to examine the many ways your child interacts with others online. Cyberbullying can be easy to spot when carried out through a text, tweet, or response to a status update on Facebook. Other, less obvious, forms of cyberbullying include antagonizing someone through fake online accounts and tagging the person on posts of embarrassing information, photos, or videos.

“Cyberbullying could happen in many forms, there have been cases



of young people (and even parents) posing as 'love interests' and tormenting young people to the point of suicide, college students outing their roommates for being gay (also resulting in suicide), as well as young people who share nude photos via text or online," Ms. Liriano says. "They need to understand that 'nudes' are a form of child pornography, so taking a photo, sending it, or re-posting is all illegal — and very, very damaging. There have been too many cases of suicide due to cyberbullying, so it is increasingly important that we educate and advocate for our young people."

The YMCA of Greater New York also provides great guidance for examining whether your child is the victim of cyberbullying, and some tips to help protect her from it:

Make face time with your kids —

the old-fashioned way. Spend time with your kids every day and give them your full, undivided attention. Turn off cellphones, televisions, and computers to create a conversation-friendly environment.

Learn the signs. A child who is being bullied may have a loss of appetite, may lose interest in favorite activities, and may withdraw socially and emotionally in other ways. Watch for changes in behavior and seek help if you suspect something is wrong.

Be available to talk — but don't force it. Kids may feel embarrassed, ashamed, angry, or confused about being bullied, and it may be difficult for them to talk about it with you. Give them time to open up, and let them know you are there and will be supportive if they need your help.

Let them know it's not their

fault. Never blame a child for being bullied or for not "fighting back." It can be helpful to share one or two of your own personal stories so your kids know they're not the only ones to experience this kind of behavior or feel the way they do.

Help find positive ways for them to feel empowered and regain self-esteem. Show that you are committed to helping them resolve the issue, and talk through ways to address or cope with the bullying behavior.

Parents need to be proactive in monitoring their children's behavior in response to their online interactions, because they cannot rely on their children coming to them once the bullying has occurred. Many pre-teens and teens are hesitant to report being bullied, and recent studies have found that one in four teens

have been the victims of cyberbullying, and one in six admit to having cyberbullied someone else. In fact, girls are more likely than boys to be bullies and victims on the internet.

Use of the internet and social media is inevitable in the day-to-day socializing of pre-teens and teens. Parents should keep a close eye on children's social media accounts and be aware of what is posted and made public. Also, reading the comments made by others will give parents a better understanding of interactions between their children and peers online. If your children are on social media, you should have an understanding of social media yourself.

Shnieka Johnson is an education consultant and freelance writer. She is based in Manhattan where she resides with her husband and son. Contact her via her website, www.shniekajohnson.com.



Photo by Rosalie O'Connor

Rosie's Theater Kids co-founders Rosie O'Donnell and Lori Klinger with students from the program and gala honoree Kristin Chenoweth on the red carpet.

On with the show!

How Rosie's Theater Kids gives children a moment in the spotlight

BY TAMMY SCILEPPI

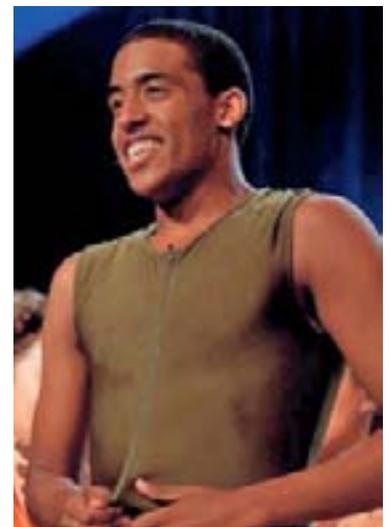
Rosie O'Donnell may not like Donald Trump, but she loves kids and can't do enough for them. The wisecracking, outspoken actress and comedian is co-parenting five children and has her hands full, but she has always made time for her other kids — the students in her Rosie's Theater Kids arts organization, many of whom happen to live in underserved communities here.

Back in early November, O'Donnell hosted a star-studded gala event at the Marriott Marquis on Broadway, which featured a special performance by her super-talented Rosie's Theater Kids students. Thanks to the arts organization she co-founded in 2003, the lives of more than 50,000 city students' lives have changed for the better.

Honoring Emmy and Tony Award-winning actress Kristin Chenoweth, and raising more than \$800,000 to benefit the city's public school students, Rosie's Theater Kids' 12th annual Gala recognized Chenoweth for her ongoing dedication and focus on arts education. One hundred percent of the proceeds from the benefit will be used to support the organization's academic and artistic programs, which more than 2,000 local



Zi-Ying Cao, 17, performed at a recent gala event honoring Kristen Chenoweth. She is a senior at Stuyvesant High School and lives in Chinatown, Manhattan. She won a scholarship at Rosie's Theater Kids and is now a Scholastic and Artistic Merit Scholar.



Rosie's Theater Kids graduate Daniel Estrella, now 22, first joined the program in the fifth grade. He's currently a student at the University of Michigan, received a scholarship from the university and is expected to receive a degree in musical theater in the summer of 2016.

students utilize annually.

Chenoweth spoke to the importance of the organization, and how O'Donnell has inspired her.

"My love for kids who love the arts is never ending! I am simply

here to help inspire them to follow their dreams, whatever they may be. When a child finds their purpose, they have no bounds. That combined with self-esteem, of course," said Chenoweth. "My job and Rosie's

job is to keep them on their path. She has inspired me to start my own theater arts camp in the summer in my home state of Oklahoma. Giving back really inspires the one doing the GIVING. We are proving [that] the arts in schools and summer camps can change lives.”

It was an evening to remember. Many Broadway celebs were there to celebrate Rosie’s Theater Kids, among them actor BD Wong, comedian Fran Drescher, singer Orfeh, and actresses Jessie Mueller and Tatum O’Neal. But the real stars were the kids themselves. After welcome remarks by O’Donnell, the kids performed “RISE” (with music and lyrics by Stevie Wonder and Sara Bareilles), “A Little Medley,” and “Me, You, We,” inspired by the book, “I Am Malala,” by Malala Yousafzai, the youngest-ever Nobel Prize laureate.

“We are grateful to all of those who were able to join us at the gala,” said Rosie’s Theater Kids Co-Founder Lori Klinger. “It is through everyone’s continued support that Rosie’s Theater Kids has been able to provide such meaningful experiences and ultimately enriching the lives of students through the arts. For many of our students, Rosie’s Theater Kids is so much more than an afterschool program — it is a family, a second home. The lessons they learn during their time with us are not just preparing them for the stage, they are preparing them for life.”

Rosie’s Theater Kids has teamed up with expert staff and guest Broadway professionals, so students can benefit from classes in music, dance, and drama, life skills development, academic guidance, and if needed, additional funding for higher education.

As one of the largest arts-in-education programs serving grades pre-K through 12, it is one of the only organizations that provide all of its core services free of charge to students and schools.

Thanks to O’Donnell’s vision, the organization helped creative students like Stuyvesant High School senior Zi-Ying Cao from Chinatown get a jumpstart in life. The rest was up to her.

Zi-Ying, now 17, is currently with the program. (She was one of the gala performers who sang “Me, You, We.”)

After winning a scholarship at Rosie’s Theater Kids, she became a Scholastic and Artistic Merit Scholar and is now applying to Ivy

League schools. The scholarship assists students in need of “gap funding,” which is the remaining balance of funds needed to fill the gap between a student’s financial aid reward and the cost of tuition. The funds will be used to cover tuition, room and board, books, and other necessary items that come with the cost of higher education.

Zi-Ying’s parents were born and raised in small villages in China. She moved with her family to the US when she was 2. Because her parents knew very little English upon arrival, they were forced to work low-paying, laborious jobs.

Despite her modest upbringing, Zi Ying’s family always placed an emphasis on the importance of education. Her mother valued education so much that she made sacrifices in order to pay for tutoring for Zi Ying and her younger sister.

In addition to her many academic achievements, she is also an incredibly talented performer, having channeled her inner artist during her time at Rosie’s Theater Kids.

Daniel Estrella, now 22, is a scholarship student studying at the University of Michigan, as a member of its prestigious Musical Theatre program. He’s a Rosie’s Theater Kids graduate. He explains his involvement in the program:

“It was more than 10 years ago that I was introduced to RTKids’ PS Broadway program, which provided me, an overjoyed fifth grade student from the Bronx, who loved Motown, with an outlet to perform. My weekly RTKids classes at PS 153 introduced me to Broadway — a place accessible by way of a handful of subway stops, yet seemingly worlds away. This introduction to musical theater ended up truly changing my life.

“In addition to a multitude of unforgettable and professional experiences, Rosie’s Theater Kids helped me get into one of the top performing arts high schools in New York, provided me with SAT classes and tutoring, and offered intense, personalized assistance as I applied to colleges,” said Estrella. “I would not have had access to these resources otherwise.”

For more about Rosie’s Theater Kids [445 West 45th St., Manhattan], visit www.rosiestheaterkids.org.

Tammy Scileppi is a Queens-based freelance writer and parent. Interviewing hundreds of New York City’s movers and shakers has been an amazing adventure for her. Scileppi’s work has appeared in a variety of media outlets.

**BROADWAY’S HOLIDAY SMASH HIT
RETURNS WITH AN
ALL NEW SHOW!**



THE ILLUSIONISTS
LIVE ON BROADWAY

**“A HIGH-TECH MAGIC
EXTRAVAGANZA”**
- NEW YORK TIMES

“JAW-DROPPING”
- NEW YORK DAILY NEWS

**LIMITED BROADWAY ENGAGEMENT
NOVEMBER 19–JANUARY 3**

Ticketmaster.com | 877.250.2929

Neil Simon Theatre
250 W. 52nd Street
TheIllusionistsLive.com

PARENTING
MEDIA ASSOCIATION
2015 Bronze
Award Winner
Editorial Awards
Competition



JUST WRITE MOM

DANIELLE SULLIVAN

Not quite sold on the Elf on the Shelf

Our Elf on the Shelf only arrived in time for my youngest child. The older ones were past the watch-keeping stage when the good old elf made his debut. I found a Christmas photo from a couple of years ago in which our elf was smugly propped up behind our five-gallon fish tank. In our family, the routine was that I place him in strange places, not exactly in compromising positions as much as unexpected places, because my son just did not fall for the whole “elf is watching out” thing at all.

Ever since we got the elf years ago as the result of a public relations gift, it remained little more than a decorative plush. If anything, we found him ... unsettling. It was mostly his expression, I think. That peculiar painted smile and unnerving eyes reminded me more of Halloween than Christmas.

My son never believed in the elf, and only told me how creepy he looked and to stop moving it around. So, of course, I purposely put it in odd places that might creep him out, and when he found it, he laughed and laughed.

The elf was found upside-down and tightly stuffed through the handle of our kitchen cabinet, popping his eerie head out from behind my son's school picture that hangs in the dining room, and in the porch, just waiting for one of us to let the dogs out in the yard and get a good fright.

Admittedly, it isn't the way you're supposed to utilize the good-old elf, but that's how we had

fun with it. The original idea of the elf's purpose from the accompanying storybook is cute enough: the elf watches over the kids and reports their activity back to Santa, as long as the kids never touch him.

Although after writing that, to me, he sounds more like a whiny tattler with a built-in protection plan (hence the hands-off policy).

Yet, there are hoards of parents who love the elf and tons of kids who can't wait to wake up and look for him. And that's great. It just didn't work out for us that way.

Perhaps the fact that we didn't name him (which, according to the book, is how the elf gets his magic so he can fly back and forth from the North Pole to report on the goodness — or I suppose, “badness” — of the kids he's watching) is the reason why he held no special place for us. More likely, though, I think it's just that I was skeptical from the get-go, and my kids picked that up. C'mon, a scary-looking, cotton-filled elf holding the power over what lies beneath the tree on Christmas morning? Sounds pretty outlandish to me.

I mean, if I ever get the chance, I'll ask Santa what he thinks of that one. After all, we all know it's the big, bearded, white-haired guy who really counts! Oh yeah, and Rudolph, too.

Danielle Sullivan, a mom of three, has worked as a writer and editor in the parenting world for more than 10 years. Sullivan also writes about pets and parenting for Disney's Babble.com. Find Sullivan on her blogs, Just Write Mom and Some Puppy To Love.





EXPERT HELP FOR CHILDREN WITH AUTISM

Comprehensive, flexible, and individualized home based and community ABA therapy.

Office based diagnostic evaluations & developmental assessments.

Serving families in their homes in all NYC boroughs and Westchester with 3 Convenient office locations in Brooklyn, Bronx and Manhattan

An in-network partner with most major insurances. Private pay or school based SETTS services also available.

Now accepting new referrals.



Applied Behavioral Interventions
abisvc.com
(646) 666-3088
intake@abisvc.com



SPEECH PATHOLOGY & SWALLOWING DISORDER SERVICES OF LONG ISLAND

Specializing in the Treatment and Correction of:

- Language Disorders • Memory & Auditory Processing Difficulties
- Fluency • Voice Disorders • Motor Planning Disorders
- Deviate Swallowing which Contributes to Orthodontic, Pedodontic and Periodontic Problems
- Tongue Thrust • Feeding and Swallowing Problems / Aversions
- Thumb and Finger Sucking • Articulation Disorders • Oral Facial Muscle Weakness

Specialized Therapy Approaches Including

- PROMPT Therapy • Individual Feeding Therapy
- Augmentative Communication Evaluations & Therapy

**PARTICIPATING WITH MOST MAJOR
HEALTH INSURANCE COMPANIES**

**444 LAKEVILLE ROAD
LAKE SUCCESS, NY 11042
718-640-6767
WWW.LISPEECHANDMYO.COM**

LIC Flea & Food presents:



QUEENS

HOLIDAY MARKET

at

THE SHOPS AT

Atlas Park

**8000 COOPER AVENUE
GLENDALE, NY 11385**

*Unique Gifts • FOOD • Arcade • VINTAGE
Art • SWEETS • Kids Entertainment • MUSIC • Beer
Garden • HANDCRAFTED ITEMS • and more*

EVERY SATURDAY & SUNDAY

Indoors Through Christmas

STARTING NOV 28 11AM-7PM

PARKING ON SITE BUS LINES - Q29, Q47, Q54

VENDORS

APPLY AT WWW.LICFLEA.COM



@LICFlea

What's the best emergency care?

Deciding between pediatrician vs. urgent care vs. the emergency room

BY JAMIE LOBER

The decision of whether to take your child to the pediatrician, an urgent care clinic, or the emergency room when he does not feel well may seem like common sense, but for some parents, it raises some questions on what the right choice would be.

Parents should have a pediatrician that they like and trust for their child and who has a relationship with your family and knows the child well, including his past medical history and allergies. An urgent care center caters specifically to patients with ailments that can't wait for an appointment with a physician several days out, but that aren't severe enough to merit an emergency-room visit. The drawback to an urgent care center and emergency room is that the doctor will not know your child as well or have the same kind of follow-up as the pediatrician.

At this time of year, one of the most common complaints is the seasonal cold, which can be treated at home unless a child is having difficulty breathing, a high fever, or it goes on for more than three to five days.

"There is something called croup, which is when kids make a bark-like cough and have noisy breathing which, if it is mild, you can be put in a steamed shower or come to the pediatrician's office. But if your pediatrician's office is closed, it is a time you must go to either an urgent care center or to an emergency room," said Dr. Blair Hammond, assistant professor at Mt. Sinai Hospital. If your child is more extreme looking and working hard to breathe, he should be monitored more closely, making the emergency room a better option than the urgent care center, which is a quick in and out.

Other frequently seen issues at this time of year are strep throat,

with which your child could have a fever. The pediatrician can handle it, but after doctor's hours, it would be great to go to the urgent care center and have a strep test.

"One of my concerns about urgent care centers and emergency rooms is that they do not have pediatric-trained doctors. Medicines are dosed differently in children, and the common types of diseases children get can be different than an adult," said Hammond. For issues like ear infections, ear pains, or colds, many adults get antibiotics, whereas in kids, it is not always suggested.

"There is new data about not giving antibiotics for children with ear infections after age 2 unless there is moderate ear pain, it looks like it is bulging, and you have a fever with it," said Hammond.

The emergency room is for medical emergencies like if your child is turning blue, has a seizure, or has difficulty breathing. Doctors can do blood tests, take X-rays, and offer oxygen if needed. Kids can usually get admitted right away if necessary. The downside is that there is a large copayment.

"For most insurances, it is \$150, and there is often a long wait where you are exposed to other germs from sick people," said Hammond. When you are discharged from the emergency room, you cannot expect someone to check on you, whereas the pediatrician may ask you how things are going. Follow up is extremely important in children's healthcare.

"Many illnesses in children are caused by viruses and close observation is often the best management, but over several days is not possible in urgent care and emergency room settings," said Hammond.

If your child will stress out at the thought of the emergency room, it may be avoidable.

"We can handle 80 percent of the cases in the urgent care that we see

in the emergency room, but what we are not able to handle or handle well are people with life-threatening illnesses manifested by severe difficulty breathing, obvious injuries and conditions where it looks like a kid may need to be hospitalized," said Dr. Judah Fierstein of Mt. Sinai Hospital Urgent Care. Urgent care is a nice option for weekends and holidays as well as minor injuries or illnesses.

"We see cold, flu, earaches and a lot of gastrointestinal illnesses, respiratory illnesses, asthma, sore throats, and injuries like cuts, sprains, and fractures from the playground," said Fierstein. There are clear advantages to urgent care.

"Patients appreciate the speed, and how we run more quickly and efficiently than an emergency department, the lower cost, and that it is a safer and friendlier environment for kids," said Fierstein.

While it is often overlooked, do not ignore the existence of urgent care.

"It is a great and convenient place to get care that fills a really important gap when you have two choices, to wait until tomorrow or go to the emergency room — and there is not a good choice other than the urgent care," said Fierstein. Urgent care doctors are not replacements for their alternatives, but rather partners in good health.

"We have a specific role and are there when pediatricians are not and do things they cannot do. We do not try to take care of the emergencies, because they need to go where they belong, but when people come in who need real emergency care, we stabilize them and arrange the transportation to get them attended," said Fierstein.

An urgent care center is easy and great when you want a quick diagnosis like a urinary tract infection or strep throat. With bacterial infections like strep throat, a child will



usually start to feel better after being on an antibiotic for 24 hours and will no longer need to be seen. Sometimes parents go to an urgent care for reassurance when something can be managed at home.

“For vomiting and diarrheal illness, most are caused by viruses and the recommendation is to try to keep the child hydrated by giving small amounts of liquid and make sure he is peeing enough,” said Hammond. If a child is not urinating for long periods of time, the urgent care or emergency room might be necessary for rehydration or getting IV fluids. While you may feel a rash should be seen right away, you can usually wait and follow up with the pediatrician. For complicated rashes, you

may be referred to a dermatologist.

Do not be scared of fever unless your child is younger than 2 months, in which case he should be seen.

“Fever is the body’s way of fighting infection, and children, unlike adults, have not been exposed to as many viruses, so they have less immunity,” said Hammond. Kids also tend to put more things in their mouth and touch everything.

“They may get eight to 10 infections a year, and when a child is done with one cough he may get a new cough, but that is classic and typical, especially between ages infancy to 3,” said Hammond.

Obviously, broken bones should be evaluated in the emergency room and deep wounds should be cleaned

and seen as soon as possible to decrease risk of infection. Do not panic.

“There is good data that if children fall from a height of less than two feet and there is no loss of consciousness and they appear completely well, they can usually be observed at home for any signs of vomiting, severe headache, neurological changes, or balance problems,” said Hammond.

Particularly if you go to an urgent care or emergency room, ask questions.

“You want to make sure the doctor explains exactly what medicine he is giving and why and get the results for any tests or cultures that were done,” said Hammond.

Sometimes results are not available right away so you want to follow up and be sure the information is sent to your pediatrician’s office, so he is aware of what was done. Be sure that you think through your decision on where to go and when. Remember that in little kids, the immune system is not that great, so you want to stay home and talk to your pediatrician when you can, so your child is not exposed to unnecessary viruses and bacteria at the urgent care center and emergency room.

Jamie Lober, author of “Pink Power” (www.getpinkpower.com), is dedicated to providing information on women’s and pediatric health topics. She can be reached at jamie@getpinkpower.com.

© 2015 Jamie Lober

Talking about touching

Yes, it can be embarrassing. But there are good reasons to talk to your children about masturbation

BY JAMIE LOBER

Topics that used to turn heads and evoke giggles are now coming to the forefront as New York parents get involved with their kids' sexuality. Talking to children about masturbation can be uncomfortable, but it is an important conversation to have.

"The reality is that most parents and teens do not bring it up on a regular basis when they come to see a doctor — unless it is causing them problems," said Dr. Caroline Barangan, assistant professor of pediatrics and adolescent medicine specialist at Mount Sinai. A big reason is that either the patient or physician may not feel comfortable broaching the topic.

"How we educate our parents in regards to how to approach masturbation at home would be in the bigger context of how they bring up sexual behaviors and sexual activity in general," said Barangan. Some parents are comfortable bringing it up while others may not know how to begin. "The vast majority are not comfortable unless something came up to instigate the conversation — like a parent coming home and finding their teen with another teen making out on the sofa unexpectedly," she says.

Find an avenue to approach sexuality. Timing is everything.

"Bring up the conversation about sexual behaviors once kids start asking questions or if they see something on television or a reference in music," said Barangan. "It should be brought up at 9 years old, before puberty starts, to see what your kid knows or what he has heard from friends."

Some kids may not even know what masturbation means.

"You can see masturbation in young kids even before the age of 5, even though they do not realize that is what

they are doing. The reason you see it in kids between 4 and 8 years old is because they are exploring their body," said Barangan.

Giving your child time and respect can be helpful. "Curiosity can be normal because they do not realize what social norms are and the meaning of privacy."

The American Academy of Pediatrics defines masturbation as self-stimulation of the genitals.

It is your job as a parent to talk about what should be done in private and what is socially appropriate.

"When a kid in the kindergarten, first, or second grade is doing public masturbation, exposing himself, or trying to touch other people's genitalia, you think about autism spectrum disorder, developmental delay, or conditions where a kid cannot control himself or grasp it is inappropriate and should not be done in public," said Barangan.

From a medical standpoint, it is a concern whether or not the behavior is a sign that the child has been abused or neglected. Some forms of masturbation are unacceptable.

"If they are inflicting harm on themselves, inserting foreign objects into their genitalia, or forcing themselves on other kids, those are red flag signs that should be brought up with the doctor to see if more assessment needs to happen," said Barangan. By ages 10, 11, and 12, kids should be aware that masturbation should only occur in private.

When you have an older child, give him space.

"I want to advocate for the adolescent person with regards to making sure parents know they should not walk into anybody's room without knocking first in order to respect the adolescent's privacy," said Barangan.

Your child knows best when he is cognitively and emotionally ready to have sex if that is his choice.

"It is also cultural and depends on religious background, where kids may get messages that masturbation is bad and if you do it you will go blind, grow hair on your palms, or will hurt yourself in some way, and those things are false," said Barangan.

Encourage your child to ask questions of the doctor and make sure his provider is comfortable answering and reassuring him of what is healthy and safe.

Jamie Lober, author of "Pink Power" (www.getpinkpower.com), is dedicated to providing information on women's and pediatric health topics. She can be reached at jamie@getpinkpower.com.

© 2015 Jamie Lober



NEW YORK **SPECIAL CHILD**
LONG ISLAND **SPECIAL CHILD**

Trusted since 2008

Informing & Enriching
"Special Needs"
Families throughout
NYC & Long Island

For more information about distribution or
how to get your free copy, please
e-mail us at family@englocal.com.

Visit us online at

www.NYParenting.com

Like us on our Facebook page, NYParenting
or follow us on Twitter



To advertise your business and or services
contact us at 718-260-4554 or
e-mail us at family@englocal.com

New York Parenting/CNG

1 MetroTech Center North - 10th Fl. • Brooklyn, NY 11201
718-260-4554 • family@englocal.com



ONCE UPON A MATTRESS

NOVEMBER 23 - JANUARY 3, 2016

ABRONS ARTS CENTER 466 GRAND ST

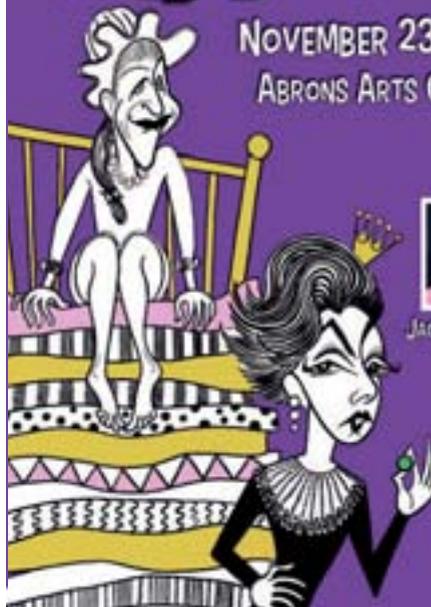
STARRING



JACKIE HOFFMAN



JOHN "LYSDNA" EFFERSON



Visit transportgroup.org
or call 866-811-4111
to purchase

**Gazillion
Bubble
Show**

"IT WILL BLOW YOUR MIND"
-OPRAH

Telecharge.com • 212.239.6200
GazillionBubbleShow.com
New World Stages, 340 W. 50th St.
For groups or birthdays call 866.642.0849

STOMP

"EXUBERANT!
A SURE-FIRE CROWD PLEASER" - THE NEW YORK TIMES

STOMP
ESTABLISHED IN 1994 NYC

ticketmaster® or 800-982-2787
ORPHEUM THEATRE 2ND AVENUE AT 8TH STREET
STOMPONLINE.COM

Calendar

DECEMBER



Photo by Julieta Cervantes

Celebrating the dance of Mexico

Celebrate the holidays with a special performance of the Calpulli Mexican Dance Company at Flushing Town Hall on Dec. 13.

Calpulli celebrates the rich dance traditions of Mexico's diverse cultural history interpreted through its unique artistic vision. The fresh, vital repertoire honors Mexico's past and Mexican-

American cultural expression in the United States. Suitable for all ages.

Calpulli Mexican Dance Company performance on Dec. 13 at 2 pm; tickets are \$15 and \$10 for members.

Flushing Town Hall [137-35 Northern Blvd., (718) 463-7700; www.flushingtownhall.org].

Never miss a great event!

Sign up for our FREE newsletter and get twice-a-week ideas for you and your family right in your mailbox. NYParenting.com

Calendar

Submit a listing

This calendar is dedicated to bringing our readers the most comprehensive list of events in your area. But to do so, we need your help!

Send your listing request to queenscalendar@cnglocal.com — and we'll take care of the rest. Please e-mail requests more than three weeks prior to the event to ensure we have enough time to get it in. And best of all, it's FREE!

FRI, DEC. 4

IN QUEENS

"A Christmas Carol": St. Francis Prep-Ralph Clifford Auditorium, 6100 Francis Lewis Blvd.; (718) 423-8810; www.sfponline.org; 7 pm and 8 pm; \$12 (\$5 students and children).

Students in the the St. Francis Prep Alvernian Drama Society present this holiday classic along with a tree lighting and toy drive. Hot chocolate and carols celebrate the tree lighting along with a special visit from Santa.

SAT, DEC. 5

IN QUEENS

Tree lighting: Astoria Park lawn, Ditmars Blvd. and 19th Street; (718) 728-7820; www.nycgovparks.org; 1 pm to 5 pm; Free.

Celebrate the holiday with songs, stories, and entertainment. For all ages.

"A Christmas Carol": 7 pm. St. Francis Prep-Ralph Clifford Auditorium. See Friday, Dec. 4.

FURTHER AFIELD

"Beauty and the Beast's Magical Christmas": The Suffolk County Vanderbilt Museum, 180 Little Neck Rd., Long Island; (631) 854-5579; www.vanderbiltmuseum.org; 1 pm; \$10 (\$8 children).

This charming tale follows characters that children have come to know and love. Come and share the joys of Christmas with Beauty and the Beast.

SUN, DEC. 6

IN QUEENS

Cornstarch creations: New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St.; (718) 699-0005 X 353; www.nyscience.org; 10:30 am to 12:30 pm; \$8 (\$5 for members).

Little makers presents this fun workshop where families use their imagination and cornstarch to make



Photo by Shari Romar

Light up the holidays

Get into the spirit at the Queens Botanical Garden for a tree lighting and a winter solstice celebration on Dec. 6.

Enjoy the season with musical performances by The Rough Dozen, photos with Santa (fee required), a garden tour, botanical crafts (while supplies last), the

tree lighting, and blowout sales throughout the day at the shop! Dress for the weather.

Tree Lighting on Dec. 6 from 1 to 5 pm; free (some events require a fee).

Queens Botanical Garden [43-50 Main St. in Flushing, (718) 539-5296; www.queensbotanical.org].

sculptures. Recommended for children 18 months and older.

Winter solstice and tree lighting: Queens Botanical Garden, 43-50 Main St.; (718) 539-5296; www.queensbotanical.org; 1 pm to 5 pm; Free (Some events require a fee).

Musical performances by The Rough Dozen, photos with Santa (fee required), a garden tour, botanical crafts (while supplies last), the tree lighting, and blowout sales throughout the day at the shop! Dress for the weather.

Winter Holiday festival: Flushing Town Hall, 137-35 Northern Boulevard; (718) 463-7700; www.flushingtownhall.org; 1 pm to 4 pm; \$5 (Free

for members).

Celebrate Christmas, Hanukkah and Kwanzaa with art making, crafts, songs and stories.

House tour: Flushing Town Hall, 137-35 Northern Boulevard; (718) 463-7700; www.flushingtownhall.org; 1 pm to 5 pm; \$25 (\$20 in advance, \$10 for Children 12 and younger).

Seven historic sites in Flushing and Corona invite you to celebrate the holidays.

Holiday market: Flushing Town Hall, 137-35 Northern Boulevard; (718) 463-7700; www.flushingtownhall.org; 1 pm to 5 pm; Free.

Local artisans present their works for sale.

FURTHER AFIELD

"Beauty and the Beast's Magical Christmas": 1 pm. The Suffolk County Vanderbilt Museum. See Saturday, Dec. 5.

SAT, DEC. 12

IN QUEENS

Hands-on History: King Manor Museum, 150-03 Jamaica Ave.; (718) 206-0545, ext. 13; www.kingmanor.org; Noon-3 pm; Free.

Crafting and history fun. Learn about 19th-century seasonal festivals and hear how the King family spent the cold winter months. Make a snowflake and a pomander, a scented ornament made with citrus and spices.

New Moon: Fort Totten Visitor's Center, Ordinance Rd. at Shore Road; (718) 352-1769; www.nycgovparks.org; 6 pm to 7:30 pm; Free.

The rangers lead you on a tour of the solar system and discuss the science, history and folklore of the universe. Astronomy programs feature the use of telescopes and binoculars to observe specific astronomical events. The moon will be directly between the Earth and sun and will not be visible from Earth. With no moonlight to interfere, this is the best time of the month to observe faint objects such as galaxies and star clusters. Astronomy programs are best on clear cloudless nights, please call ahead if you are concerned about weather conditions.

FURTHER AFIELD

"Beauty and the Beast's Magical Christmas": 1 pm. The Suffolk County Vanderbilt Museum. See Saturday, Dec. 5.

SUN, DEC. 13

IN QUEENS

Gingerbread creations: New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St.; (718) 699-0005 X 353; www.nyscience.org; 10:30 am to 12:30 pm; \$8 (\$5 for members).

Little makers offer a unique opportunity for children to design and create mini gingerbread inspired hoses using graham crackers, frosting and candy.

Calpulli Community: Flushing Town Hall, 137-35 Northern Boulevard; (718) 463-7700; www.flushingtownhall.org; 2 pm; \$15 (\$10 members).

Calpulli Mexican Dance Company

Continued on page 30

Calendar

Our online calendar is updated daily at www.NYParenting.com/calendar

Continued from page 29

performs traditional selections.

The Saint who became Santa: King Manor Museum, 150-03 Jamaica Ave.; (718) 206-0545, X 13; www.kingmanor.org; 3 pm to 4 pm; Free.

Older teens enjoy listening to historian Peter Rose discuss the history and life of the Dutch saint. The talk includes a demonstration of Dutch wooden cake boards as well as a discussion of holiday baked goods. RSVP required.

FURTHER AFIELD

"Beauty and the Beast's Magical Christmas": 1 pm. The Suffolk County Vanderbilt Museum. See Saturday, Dec. 5.

SAT, DEC. 19

FURTHER AFIELD

"Beauty and the Beast's Magical Christmas": 1 pm. The Suffolk County Vanderbilt Museum. See Saturday, Dec. 5.

SUN, DEC. 20

IN QUEENS

Winter snow globes: New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St.; (718) 699-0005 X 353; www.nyscience.org; 10:30 am to 12:30 pm; \$8 (\$5 for members).

Children make their own globes.

FURTHER AFIELD

"Beauty and the Beast's Magical Christmas": 1 pm. The Suffolk County Vanderbilt Museum. See Saturday, Dec. 5.

MON, DEC. 21

FURTHER AFIELD

"The Princess Frog – A Musical Fairy Tale": Long Island Children's Museum, 11 Davis Ave. at W. Road, Long Island; (516) 224-5800; www.licm.org; 11:30 am and 2 pm; \$9 with museum admission (\$7 members/ \$12 theater only).

Mix three wild boys, who happen to be princes, one frustrated (Queen) mother, three magic rocks, and an enchanted frog and you have the makings of a modern fairy tale; set to come to life on the LICM stage! Based on an Italian folktale, the "Princess Frog" has been re-created by Lena Pennino-Smith, author of last season's break out family musical, "Happy As Clams." For children 3 and older.



Small but fabulous

Hey, we shrunk the house! The Astolat Castle Dollhouse will be on display at the Shops at Columbus Circle now through Dec. 8.

Appraised at \$8.5 million dollars, and the most valuable dollhouse ever made — the Astolat Castle — houses the finest miniatures in the world, with more than 30,000 items including beds, pianos, oil paintings, mirrors, fireplaces, gold miniature jewelry, rare-mini books more than 100 years old, fine rugs, fabrics, and pieces made of silver and gold. It has seven levels, stairways, hallways, a basement, a wine cellar, a

kitchen, and an armory. There are formal rooms, a library, a music room, a grand ballroom and a bar, and that's before you get to the Wizard's tower on the top level.

The house was designed and built by miniaturist Elaine Diehl and took more than two years to create. It weighs 800 pounds and features 29 rooms.

Astolat Castle Dollhouse on display now through Dec. 8, daily from 10 am to 9 pm; free.

The Shops at Columbus Circle [10 Columbus Circle at W. 59th Street in Midtown, (212) 823-6300; www.theshopsatcolumbuscircle.com]

TUES, DEC. 22

FURTHER AFIELD

"Elf": The Theater at Madison Square Garden, 4 Penn Plaza at Eighth Avenue, Manhattan; (800) 901-4092; www.newyorkcitytheatre.com/theaters/madisonsquaregardentheater/elf.php; 7 pm; Starting at \$51.

Santa accidentally picks up an orphaned baby boy and brings him to the North Pole. The little boy grows up and realizes he is really not like the other elves. What is an elf to do? Buddy goes on search to find his real parents and winds up in the city, where he meets a host of characters, including his dad, step-brother, and true love. Along the way he saves the Big Apple by bringing joy and the Christmas spirit. Special showing.

SAT, DEC. 26

IN QUEENS

Farm house tour: Queens County Farm Museum, 73-50 Little Neck Pkwy.; (718) 347-3276; www.queensfarm.org; Noon to 4 pm; Free.

Children enjoy crafting, a tour of the decorated Adriance Farmhouse, as well as a cup of freshly mulled cider.

SUN, DEC. 27

IN QUEENS

Hot cocoa to go: New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St.; (718) 699-0005 X 353; www.nyscience.org; 10:30 am – 12:30 pm; \$8 (\$5 members).

Families create their own fun flavor of this winter treat in the workshop.

Remake the holidays: New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St.; (718) 699-0005 X 353; www.nyscience.org; Noon-4 pm; free with museum admission.

Families bend, twist, light and sculpt their own version of the holiday season with workshops, demos, artist installations and more. Re-Make the Holidays is a response to increased consumption and waste during the holiday season and an attempt to give people inspiration and options to do things differently, while having fun.

Farm house tour: Noon to 4 pm. Queens County Farm Museum. See Saturday, Dec. 26.

MON, DEC. 28

IN QUEENS

Remake the holidays: Noon-4

Our online calendar is updated daily at www.NYParenting.com/calendar

pm. New York Hall of Science. See Sunday, Dec. 27.

Farm house tour: Noon to 4 pm. Queens County Farm Museum. See Saturday, Dec. 26.

TUES, DEC. 29

IN QUEENS

Remake the holidays: Noon–4 pm. New York Hall of Science. See Sunday, Dec. 27.

WED, DEC. 30

IN QUEENS

Remake the holidays: Noon–4 pm. New York Hall of Science. See Sunday, Dec. 27.

THURS, DEC. 31

FURTHER AFIELD

Fireworks & concert: Grand Army Plaza, Union Street between Flatbush Avenue and Prospect Park West, Brooklyn; 11 pm to 12 am; Free.

Come and celebrate the old year and the new year with this annual tradition hosted by Borough President Adams. Entertainment, refreshments, and of course fireworks. Come early and get your spot.

LONG-RUNNING

IN QUEENS

Gingerbread Lane: New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St.; (718) 699-0005 X 353; www.nyscience.org; Mondays – Thursdays, 9:30 am – 5 pm, Fridays, 9:30 am – 5 pm, Saturdays, 10 am – 6 pm, Sundays, 10 am – 6 pm.; Free with Museum admission.

Visitors marvel at the homemade gingerbread houses made entirely of edible gingerbread, royal icing and candy. The houses are the creation of chef John Lovitch.

Workshop: Museum of the Moving Image, 36-01 35th Ave.; (718) 777-6888; www.movingimage.us; Saturdays, Noon, Now – Sat, Dec. 19; Free with museum admission.

Children learn how cats took over the internet in this purrfect afternoon drop-in studio session. Activities include making a cat in space animation, designing your own cat celebrity, and more. Recommended for ages 7 and up, accompanied by an adult.

Family Friendly Comedy Show – Kids Get a Chance to Perform: Creek and the Cave Comedy Club, 10-93 Jackson Ave.; (718)



A magical Christmas

The timeless tale of “Beauty and the Beast” now includes a magical Christmas at the Suffolk County Vanderbilt Museum from Dec. 5 through Dec. 20.

Presented by the Arena Players, this charming tale follows characters that children have come to know and love. Beauty has tamed the beast and now the two celebrate the holiday to-

gether. Come share the love.

“Beauty and the Beast’s Magical Christmas,” Saturdays and Sundays, Dec. 5 to Dec. 20; showtime is 1 pm on all days. Tickets are \$10 for adults, \$8 for children, and free for children under 3 years old.

The Suffolk County Vanderbilt Museum [180 Little Neck Rd. in Centerport, (631) 854-5579; www.vanderbiltmuseum.org]

706-8783; guesswhatpgcomedy@gmail.com; www.facebook.com/guesswhatPG; Saturday, Dec. 19, 12:30 pm; free.

A PG-rated, family-friendly comedy show at the famous Creek and Cave Comedy Club featuring great comics from clubs and TV. See top comedians tell their best PG-rated family friendly jokes. In between comedians all kids get a chance to get on stage and tell a joke. Don’t worry — there are lots of joke books around for inspiration and material. Laugh, have fun and inspire a love of language and public speaking in your child! No drink or food minimum. Great brunch menu is available. Free admission for families. Show on the third Saturday of every month. 12:30 pm is a joke book workshop and 1 pm is the full show.

Claymation creatures: Museum of the Moving Image, 36-01 35th Ave.; (718) 777-6888; www.movingimage.us; Daily, 2:30 pm; Sat, Dec. 26 – Fri, Jan. 1, 2016; \$5 materials fee (museum admission).

Characters from Shaun the Sheep Movie are the inspiration for children to create their own unique clay creatures. Recommended for children 5 to 12.

FURTHER AFIELD

Annual train show: Grand Central Terminal, 42nd Street and Park Avenue, Manhattan; web.mta.info/mta/museum/#general.; Weekdays, 8 am to 8 pm, Saturdays and Sundays, 10 am to 6 pm, Now – Sun, Feb. 21, 2016; Free with standard admission.

Zip through tunnels, see familiar skyscrapers; and visit subway stops by viewing model trains. The layout Lionel Metro-North, New York Central and subway trains along with a miniature replica of Grand Central Terminal is a great way to spend the holidays.

Heart and Seoul – Korea: Brooklyn Children’s Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue, Brooklyn; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; Tuesdays – Sundays, 10 am to 5 pm, Now – Sun, Jan. 3, 2016; Free with museum admission.

The Brooklyn Children’s Museum will ride Hallyu (the Korean Wave) with a new exhibit that brings modern-day South Korea to New York City.

Astolat Castle Dollhouse: The Shops at Columbus Circle (second floor), 10 Columbus Circle at W. 59th Street, Manhattan; (212) 823-6300; www.theshopsatcolumbuscircle.com; Daily, 10 am–9 pm, Now – Tues, Dec. 8; Free.

The most valuable dollhouse ever and the finest miniature in the world will be on display this holiday season. Come and visit the house that contains more than 30,000 miniatures including beds, pianos, and even champagne buckets. The house was designed and built by miniaturist Elaine Diehl and took more than two years to create.

Holiday Train Show: New York Botanical Garden, 200th Street and Kazimiroff Blvd., The Bronx; (718) 817-8700; www.nybg.org; Daily, 11 am – 5 pm, Now – Mon, Jan. 18, 2016; Included with an All Garden Pass.

The annual event returns with more trains and more tracks with an additional 3,000 square feet of exhibition space. Displays include: Grand Central Terminal, Radio City Music Hall, the historic Hudson River Valley houses, Brooklyn Bridge, and Rockefeller Center.

Needlework and games: Lefferts Historic Homestead, 452 Flatbush Ave. between Empire Boulevard and Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn; (718) 789-2822; www.prospectpark.org; Saturdays and Sundays, 1–3 pm, Now – Mon, Dec. 28; \$3.

Join in with staff and make a small sampler and play board games.

“Elf”: The Theater at Madison Square Garden, 4 Penn Plaza at Eighth Avenue, Manhattan; (800) 901-4092; www.newyorkcitytheatre.com/theaters/madisonsquaregarden-theater/elf.php; Wednesdays, 7 pm, Thursdays, 11 am, 3 pm and 7 pm, Fridays, 11 am and 7 pm, Saturdays, 2 pm and 7 pm, Sundays, 1 and 6 pm, Wed, Dec. 9 – Sun, Dec. 27; Starting at \$51.

Santa accidentally picks up an orphaned baby boy and brings him to the North Pole. The little boy grows up and realizes he is really not like the other elves. What is an elf to do? Buddy goes on search to find his real parents and winds up in the city where he meets a host of characters, including his dad, step-brother, and true love. Along the way he saves the Big Apple by bringing joy and the Christmas spirit.



HEALTHY LIVING

DANIELLE SULLIVAN

Foods to keep away from the family dog

The holidays are hectic. The shopping, the dinners, the packed living rooms and the variety of foods available, and the general sheer chaos of it all are a recipe for our pets to consume things they should not. Little fingers passing treats under the table and pups that help themselves to whatever drops to the floor can make your dog sick to her stomach, or worse.

The following foods, which can cause afflictions in dogs, ranging from mild tummy distress to death, are seemingly innocent

and mild foods that might easily be considered harmless. This makes it all the more important that these foods stay on your radar.

Here are eight foods that dogs should not eat:

Chocolate

Luckily, many of us already know that chocolate is highly toxic for dogs. It's the chemical theobromine that causes the distress. All types of chocolate are harmful. The worst offenders are dark chocolate, unsweetened baking chocolate, and chocolate mulch.

Coffee

Ok, so what dog is gonna drink coffee? Well, that would be our lab, Django. If you have a coffee cup, she will try to get in your lap and lick it every time. Large consumptions of any caffeine (including those in energy drinks, sodas, cocoa, and even some medications) can cause death. And there is no antidote for caffeine overdose.

Grapes

Seemingly harmless, grapes and raisins can cause kidney failure. Even a small amount can make dogs sick. Repeated vomiting is a telltale sign.

Salt

Just like in humans, too much salt can cause heart, kidney, and liver problems in dogs. Dogs do not need additional salt added to their diet if they are consuming a nutritious dog food, which will already have a small amount of sodium included.

If your dog gets into a bag of chips or another salty snack, it's OK, and there is no need to panic. Just replenish your dog's water bowl to ensure that she has enough water to flush out the excess sodium. A dog would have to ingest a great amount of salt to get sodium iron poisoning.

Symptoms include excessive

drinking, vomiting, and diarrhea. Too much sodium on a regular basis can also throw off a dog's electrolyte balance.

Candy and gum

...but probably not why you think. Any foods sweetened with xylitol can be damaging. Xylitol causes a dog's blood sugar to drop and might also cause liver failure. As a result, many low-fat, diet snacks are off limits for dogs!

Macadamia nuts

This seemingly natural food can be fatal to dogs. Just a few can make them sick, and if they eat cookies with chocolate in them, that ups the chance of the consumption being fatal.

Onions and garlic

A little won't do any long-term damage, but prolonged consumption of onions and garlic breaks down a dog's red blood cells, which can lead to anemia.

Yeast dough

Just like in an oven, if it ends up in a dog's tummy, it will rise and expand, causing your dog's belly to swell — and experience a lot of pain. Oddly enough, when the yeast ferments the dough, it produces alcohol, which might also cause alcohol poisoning.

All dog owners want to safeguard their dog's health, and accidental ingestion of harmful foods often occurs as an oversight. If your dog starts experiencing vomiting, diarrhea, panting, sluggishness, or just doesn't seem right, please call your vet. It's also a good idea to keep the phone number of your local, 24-hour emergency vet in a handy place in your home.

Danielle Sullivan, a mom of three, has worked as a writer and editor in the parenting world for more than 10 years. Sullivan also writes about pets and parenting for Disney's Babble.com. Find Sullivan on her blogs, Just Write Mom and Some Puppy To Love.



theMarketplace

CHILD CARE

Child Care

Experienced mother of one will care for your child in my Forest Hills home.

929-325-4787



PARTY PLANNING

Best Clowns

Clowns • Costume Characters
Princess Parties • Magicians
Face Painters • Balloon Art
Caricaturists • Toddler Games
Cotton Candy & More

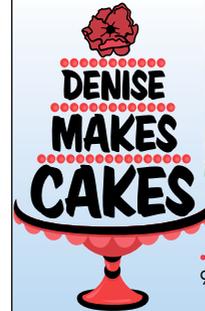
1-800-75-CLOWN or 212-614-0988

Bi-Lingual Performers Available
Private & Corporate Events
All Boros, L.I. & Westchester

www.bestclownsnyc.com



PARTY PLANNING



"Creating delicious memories one cake at a time!"

917.689.4857 • DeniseMakesCakes.com
DeniseMakesCakes@gmail.com

PARTY PLANNING

MAGIC AND COMEDY with Rico



718 434-9697 • 917 318-9092
Available For All Occasions

PARTY PLANNING

Party Pets.com



We'll Bring the Zoo to You!

Call today 516-766-1100

Party Pets of New York

Experience hands-on learning about animals from around the world!

PARTY PLANNING

Clowns

Princesses

Super

Heroes

Costume

Characters

Pop

Stars

Magicians



Let us bring the party to you!

www.party-time-express.com

917-771-1259

Silly Magic

Balloon Art

Face Painting

Glitter Tattoos

Dance Games

Cotton Candy

PARTY PLANNING

PUPPIES BROUGHT TO YOUR NEXT BIRTHDAY...
Really, Really Fun
Totally Interactive!!
Great for ages 1 1/2 to adults
call **718-258-2342**
to book your next puppy party
www.PUPPYPARTY.com
pick the puppy you want

PARTY PLANNING

Sabrina's Play Studio

- Open Play
- Birthday Parties
- Class Trips
- Special Events

52-07 Queens Blvd., Woodside, NY 11377 • 929-522-0104

Like us on
facebook
or follow us on **twitter**

Facebook Search: NYParenting

STAY CONNECTED

To advertise with us please call 718-260-2587





GOOD SENSE EATING

CHRISTINE M. PALUMBO, RD

Time to slim down Santa?

Chances are your children put out the same snacks for Santa that you did when you were their age. Perhaps you left cookies and milk or similar types of goodies. But is it time to leave Kris Kringle a snack that aligns with the healthful eating habits you foster in your children at other times of the year?

Even the kids know that Santa and Mrs. Claus could lose a few pounds. After all, in “The Night Before Christmas,” he’s described as being “chubby and plump” and having “a broad face and a little round belly that shook when he laughed, like a bowl full of jelly.”

Along with obesity, Saint Nick may be at risk for sleep apnea, heart disease, stroke, cancer, and type 2 diabetes. Uh oh.

Children can help the jolly old elf be healthier and learn good eating habits by leaving him — and his reindeer — a more nutritious snack on Christmas Eve. Or is that going too far?

A fan of providing Santa some options on Christmas Eve is registered dietitian nutritionist Christy Wilson.

“I think Santa enjoys the sweets,”

she said. “But it’s probably a good idea to give him a little variety.”

She says it’s perfectly fine to leave some cookies and a cup of milk for Santa plus a few oats or carrots for the reindeer.

“They have a long night, so they need keep up their energy,” said Wilson.

Consider changing the tradition and providing something festive, yet nourishing for Santa, who has a long night ahead of him. On Christmas Eve when you put out snacks for Father Christmas, why not give him a high-energy snack so he has the stamina to travel ’round the world — without contributing to his round belly?

Twelve better-for-Santa snacks:

- Whole-wheat pita bread wedges and hummus.
- Cranberry muffins.
- Dark chocolate-dipped strawberries.
- Spiced pecans.
- Whole-wheat biscotti.
- Roasted butternut squash wedges.



Almond cocoa-cherry chia bites

Serving: 1 bite

Recipe makes: 35 one-inch sized bites

Total Time: 20 minutes

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 ½ cup rolled oats (sometimes labeled as Old Fashioned Oats)
- ½ cup almonds, roughly chopped
- 2 tbsp. unsweetened shredded coconut
- 1 tbsp. chia seeds
- ¼ cup 72 percent cocoa dark chocolate, roughly chopped into small pieces
- ½ cup dried cherries, roughly chopped
- 1/3 cup honey
- 2/3 cup almond butter



DIRECTIONS: In a large mixing bowl, add first six ingredients into the bowl (oats to cherries). Stir all ingredients together until combined. Add honey and almond butter to bowl, and mix all ingredients together until

combined. Place mixture into the refrigerator for about 10 minutes, as this will allow it to harden and make it easier work with. Shape mixture into one-inch, round balls and place on a platter or cookie sheet. Serve immediately or refrigerate in an airtight container up to five days. You can also freeze and take out as needed.

NUTRITION FACTS: 80 calories, 9 g carbohydrates (4 g sugar), 2 g protein, 4.5 g fat (1 g saturated), 0 cholesterol, 2 g fiber, 2 percent DV vitamin A, 2 percent DV calcium, 4 percent DV iron.

Recipe used with permission from Christy Wilson Nutrition.

- Homemade cereal-based party mix.
- Cheese and crackers.
- Seedless black grapes, cheese wedges, and French bread rounds.
- Dried figs dipped in chocolate.
- Hot cocoa in an insulated mug.
- Hot spiced cider.

Wilson, who has a daughter who still believes in Santa, says last year her family put out some choices.

“We left him a few homemade cookies and something warm to drink along with a few carrots for the reindeer. It’s good for us and for Santa.”

Christine Palumbo is a Naperville-registered dietitian nutritionist who swears by a mug of homemade hot chocolate with a candy cane stirrer for Santa. Find her at Christine Palumbo Nutrition on Facebook, @PalumboRD on Twitter, or ChristinePalumbo.com.

Warmest Wishes for a Happy Holiday Season.

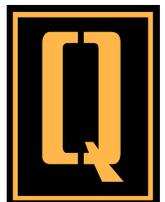


Wishing you a happy holiday season and a joyous New Year -
from the NYCB Family of Banks to your family.



Queens County Savings Bank

A Division of New York Community Bank • Member FDIC



Success starts with creative collaboration.

Apply now at:

SuccessAcademies.org

S|U|C|C|E|S|S
A|C|A|D|E|M|Y
C|H|A|R|T|E|R
S|C|H|O|O|L|S

Exceptional public education.

©2015 Success Academy Charter Schools.