

Wellness

HEALTH LETTER®

VOL. XII, NO. 6

FEELING WELL • STAYING WELL • DOING WELL

EARLY SUMMER 2006

SIMPLE GIFTS...

The “New” Seven Wonders of the world?

When a group of school students was asked to vote on the seven wonders of the world, they came up with this list:

- Egypt's Great Pyramids,
- the Taj Mahal,
- the Grand Canyon,
- the Panama Canal,
- the Empire State Building,
- the Great Wall of China, and
- Niagara Falls.

One girl in the class disagreed. For her, the seven wonders were:

1. to see,
2. to hear,
3. to touch,
4. to taste,
5. to feel,
6. to laugh, and
7. to love.

Sometimes we are so overawed by magnitude and magnificence we forget that the things we take for granted could truly be the greatest wonders of all.

Source: Adapted from *The New 7 Wonders of the World, You're Only Young Twice*, by Ronda Beaman, edD

DID YOU KNOW...

Next year, on 7 July 2007 (07/07/07) an official declaration will be made in Lisbon about “The New Seven Wonders of the World.” These will have been decided by people voting on-line at <http://www.new7wonders.com/index.php> or by phoning a specific number which can be found on the website. 21 finalist candidate monuments are listed on the website.

For the holidays

Give the gift of yourself and your time. There are countless ways you can do it, and you'll be amazed at what you get back. Here are some ideas:

- **Offer** to join someone on a daily walk or some other type of physical activity.
- **Make** a commitment to visit a housebound person or someone in an old age home at least once a month.
- **Volunteer** to coach children sports or work as a teacher's aid or assist someone who is a caregiver.
- **Walk** dogs at an animal shelter or help look after them.
- **Make** a point to have at least one conversation with your children every day that isn't about their appearance, schoolwork, or chores that need to be done.
- **Take a holiday from “The Five C's”** – criticising, comparing, complaining, competing and correcting others.
Double up on *complimenting* others.

WHAT'S INSIDE...

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16

days of activism on 'no violence against women and children'

Once again this year from the 25 November to 10 December an emphasis is being placed on no violence against women and children.

This is an important exercise – but shouldn't it be in our awareness throughout the year?

16 days out of 365 days is 4.4% of a year.

4.4% of every day would be 63 minutes or just over 1 hour.

Being aware of no violence against women for 1 hour a day does not mean that violence is permissible for the other 23 hours of the day. Similarly, the 16 days of awareness does not mean that it is acceptable to be violent towards women and children for the other 349 days.

There is only one message: "Get Help"

- **Get help** if you are a woman who is being assaulted and abused.
- **Get help** if you know of a child who is being abused or neglected.
- **Get help** if you are a man who has a tendency of being violent towards women or children.

• **Get help** if you are a woman who has a tendency of being violent towards children.

Although the 16 days are dedicated to women and children, it must be recognised that there are some men who are abused – both physically and emotionally. This violence should also not be happening.

Hotlines:

Toll-free Helpline:
0800 150 150, or
NISAA Women's Institute:
(011) 845-5804/5. ✉

Source: WPM R&D 2006

stress less

RELATIONSHIPS...

KNOWING YOURSELF – KNOWING YOUR PARTNER

One way to improve any relationship is to talk about what is important to both of you.

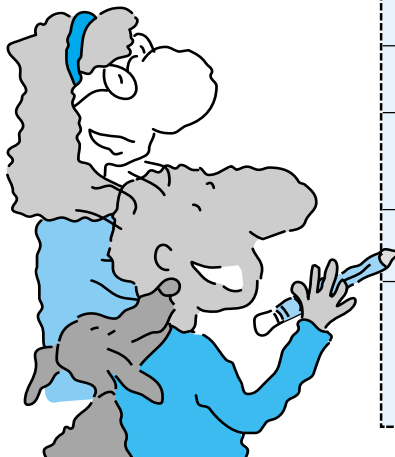
DIRECTIONS:

1. Take some time to think about these issues.

2. Write down your answers to the following suggested topics in the provided checklist. ✉

3. Share your answers with your partner.

Source: Adapted from Gottman JM, Silver N. The Seven Principles For Making Marriage Work. Three Rivers Press, 1999



WHAT I VALUE MOST IN MY PARTNER

- List qualities about your partner** you find endearing.
- Describe the first time you met**, or your first memory of your partner.
- Write down the things about your partner** that you find physically attractive.
- Think of the things your partner** does that make you proud.
- Describe the beliefs or values that you share.**
- Think of times when your partner** was very supportive of you.
- Remember the fun things you've done together.**
- Think of the difficult times you've successfully** weathered together.
- Think of those things about yourself** only your partner knows.
- Write down your HIV status** (HIV-positive, HIV-negative, Unknown). Think about what this means for each of you. ✉

BELIEVE IT OR NOT...

A LITTLE STRESS CAN BE GOOD FOR YOU

The idea that we could – or should – live without stress is nonsense. Brief periods of stress can make your blood circulate better, improve your memory, and heighten your senses.

In contrast, unrelieved, long-lasting stress can compromise the immune system as well as contribute to high blood pressure and heart disease. If you're always exhausted, feeling overwhelmed,

burned out, and irritable, there's possibly too much stress in your life. Boredom, fatigue, and ongoing restlessness can be signs of too little stress or stimulation.

To put the difference between good stress and bad stress in perspective: A roller coaster ride lasts three minutes, not three days. ✉

Source: Adapted from Sapolsky R. Why Zebras Don't Get Ulcers. 1994

GREEN TEA JUST UNFERMENTED BLACK TEA

Green tea is believed by a number of people to have special health benefits. Many people also believe that green tea comes from a different plant than black tea. Both green tea and black tea, however, are made from the leaves of the plant *Camellia sinensis*.

The leaves are just processed differently – with green tea, the freshly cut leaves are steamed, with black tea the leaves are fermented. As a result green tea has higher levels of a substance called epigallocatechin gallate (EGCG), which is thought to promote health although this hasn't been fully proven.


One major concern is that green tea may be contaminated with lead.

When three major products were tested in the USA, two of them were found to have unacceptably high levels of lead.

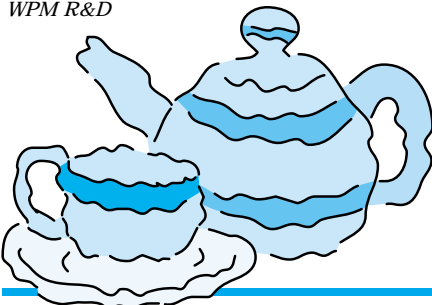
No one knows whether or not any of the green tea products in South Africa are contaminated by lead, and if so, by how much.

Too much lead over time can cause lead poisoning, and the change in petrol to lead free and lead replacement petrols has been to reduce the amount of lead people are exposed to.

Children would absorb more lead from contaminated green tea than adults would.

Lead poisoning can damage many different organs of the body including the brain. 


Source: Adapted from *Natural Medicines Comprehensive Database*; ConsumerLab; WPM R&D





TIPS:

Choose the best watermelon


Chose a watermelon that is even and proportional, feels heavy for its size, and has a hard rind. Choose one that has no signs of bruising.

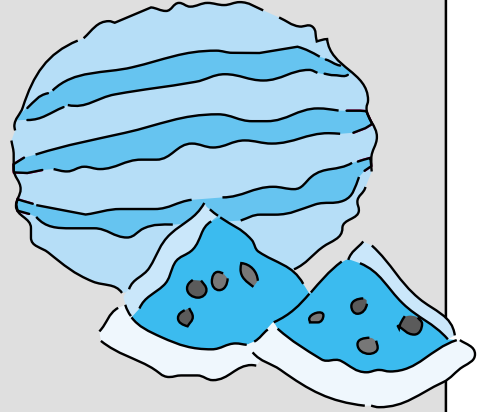
 **Make sure the rind** has no cuts or dents and is smooth – neither too shiny nor dull.

 **Turn the melon over.** Look at the part that was lying on the ground. There should be a yellow or creamy coloured area on the underside. If this contrast is not present, it was most likely harvested before it had ripened enough, and its taste, texture and juiciness will be affected.

 **If you cut the watermelon,** the flesh should be a deep colour with dark brown or black mature seeds.

The most commonly available watermelons in South Africa have a deep reddish-pink flesh, although some watermelons with a yellow, orange or even white flesh are available.

 **Once a watermelon** has been cut it should be covered




and stored in the fridge.

NUTRITIONAL VALUE AND HEALTH BENEFITS:

Because watermelons have such a high water content, they are low in kilojoules.

Watermelons are high in lycopene, an antioxidant. This is the same as the lycopene found in tomatoes.

Watermelon also contains Vitamin C and Vitamin B and beta-carotene. 


Source: Adapted from Johannesburg Fresh Produce Market website

USING A MICROWAVE

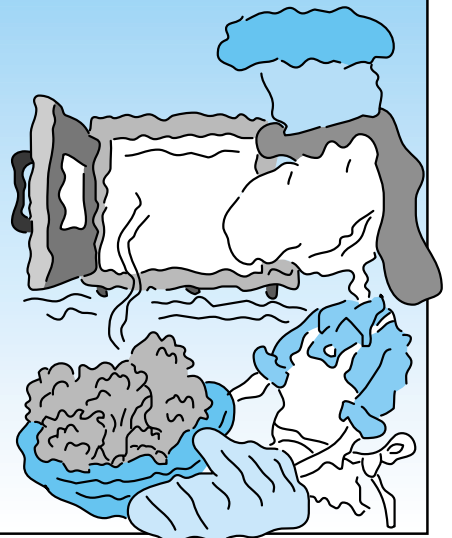
Cooking and re-heating food

Reheating food in a microwave is generally regarded as safe. Stir liquid foods (such as soup) during the reheating for a more even distribution of heat.

Remember to follow the recommended standing times to allow the food to attain an even temperature before serving and eating.

Microwave cooking is generally not to be recommended for cooking raw meat and poultry because of the uneven heat distribution pattern (cold spots) in a microwave oven. 

Source: Food Advisory Consumer Service, South Africa; <http://www.foodfacts.org.za/siteindex/safehandling>



Road Rage

People may easily get uptight when driving – it is a stressful situation. Sometimes this stress erupts into what is commonly known as “road rage”.

The term “road rage” is used to describe the degree/extent of an angry reaction by a driver of a vehicle, passenger or a pedestrian in the road traffic environment in response to some action, gesture or verbal statement made by the driver of another vehicle, passenger or pedestrian. The result of road rage can be death, injury, trauma to a person and/or damage to fixed/movable property.

Road rage can be divided on a continuum into four levels:

LEVEL 1: non-threatening expressions of annoyance such as complaining and/or yelling to one’s self and/or fellow passengers in response to another driver’s behaviour.

LEVEL 2: aggressive driving, i.e. mild, verbal or gestural expressions of anger, directed at the perceived offending motorist – includes the use of insensitive or obscene gestures and inappropriate and excessive use of the hooter and flashing of lights.

LEVEL 3: road rage (mild), i.e. threatening and intimidating behaviours such as trying to cut another car off the road or following/chasing another driver in anger.

LEVEL 4: road rage (extreme) i.e. direct confrontational behaviour such as arguing with or assaulting another motorist.

Motorists who drink and drive or carry a weapon when driving are more likely to engage in the extreme road rage behaviours (level 4), which can include getting out of the car to argue with or hurt another motorist, deliberately colliding with or damaging another vehicle, or pointing a firearm or shooting at another motorist.

A road rage incident can be reported at any police station of the South African Police Services (SAPS). The day, date, time and place of the incident must be stated, as well as the particulars of any eye-witnesses. The colour, make and number plate number of the perpetrator/suspect’s vehicle and any vehicles of potential independent eye-witnesses, should be noted. The chance of a prosecution and conviction is greater when there are independent eye-witnesses.

TIPS – TAMING ROAD RAGE:

- Adhere to all the rules of the road.**
- Back off if you get angry at another driver,** and drop back or slow down if you become the target of another motorist.
- Avoid making eye contact** with obviously aggressive drivers.
- Behave as if you know and like** the people in all the other cars.

Source: Adapted from Medical Research Council Policy Brief No 4, 2004; South African Police Services, www.saps.gov.za

Research News

DIGESTED FROM
LEADING
PUBLICATIONS AND
AUTHORITIES...

nature vs. nurture?

♥ **How quickly you age has more to do** with your lifestyle than what you inherited from your parents and grandparents or just the passing of time.

Many people seem to believe that to get old is the same thing as becoming useless, sick and decrepit, and this is what many people want to avoid.

However it is not true that getting old always means these things. Many older people live healthy fulfilled lives because they have made healthy lifestyle choices and because they are involved in doing things that they find interesting and worthwhile. For some older people their religion or spiritual beliefs are more important than the physical challenges of getting older.

The important thing is that what someone else might see as a miserable life, the older person could well say that it’s not.

Source: Adapted from Rowe JW, Kahn RL. *Successful Aging*. Dell Publishers, 1999; Crowther et. al., *Gerontologist* 2002

could it be your bra?

♥ **A survey in America has shown** that nearly 60% of women thought their bras could perhaps be contributing to their back, shoulder or neck pain.

The problems with the bras were mainly the straps, the band around the rib cage, the underwire and the cup size or cup fit.

Source: Adapted from WebMD.com



pets & children can die when left in cars

♥ **It’s never safe to leave children or pets** alone in a car or another motor vehicle in the sun.

Within just a few minutes, the inside temperatures can quickly reach deadly levels, even in weather as mild as the low-20s.

Leaving windows slightly open does not reduce the danger.

Pets and children – but especially babies can die. As tragic as this is, it is preventable. The best advice is to not even take a chance. “Just a minute” can turn into much longer without being aware of it.

Even when you leave the car, cover the seat belts and child safety seats with a towel or blanket. Plastic and metal parts can get hot enough to burn skin.

Source: Adapted from University of North Carolina Traffic Research Centre; WPM R&D

The information contained in this bulletin is the best available from the resources at our disposal, at this time. The summaries do not necessarily reflect the views of the authors or publishers of the articles cited and therefore readers are advised to refer back to the original publication if they wish to follow up on a particular report.

Before making any major changes in your medications, diet or exercise, talk to your doctor.

...You Can Use!

imagine that!

♥ A “mini-vacation” can help take the edge off a stressful day.

Try to remember a time and place that place that you found pleasant relaxing.

Take a few minutes to visualize the place in as much detail as possible, including the temperature, sounds and smells, what you were doing, and who you were with.

Practicing this kind of imagery can help you relax and feel more in control of your life.

Source: Group Health Cooperative, Seattle, WA

ID documents not necessary for ART

♥ Persons infected with HIV who meet the requirements for starting antiretroviral therapy (ART) in a public sector facility (e.g. government hospital) should not be denied ART just because they are not in possession of an identity document, according to the Project Manager of the Comprehensive HIV and AIDS Care, Management and Treatment Plan.

Source: Southern African HIV Clinicians Society 2006

South Africa declared polio free

♥ The world polio-virus certification body, the Global Certification Commission (GCC) has declared South Africa polio free.

According to the GCC's subcommittee in Africa, the Africa Region Certificate Commission (ARCC) there is enough evidence to support that there is no poliovirus circulation in South Africa.

The ARCC is an independent body that was established by the Global Certification Commission (GCC) to oversee the process of Polio Free Certification in the African Region.

Source: Department of Health, October 2006

VOICES FOR A...

“Malaria-Free Future” project

Effective programmes and strategies for malaria control have been found to include the following five factors:

1. Insecticide-treated mosquito nets. The disadvantage of these is that the nets need to be installed and used correctly; they need to be re-treated with insecticide every 6 months or after washing and this may not be correctly done. A new “long lasting net” which has the insecticide “built in” to the strands can last more than 4 years.

When visiting a malaria area, it's important to use malaria nets correctly as a part of an overall malaria prevention strategy.

2. Indoor residual spraying refers to the spraying of the insides of houses with DDT. This is controversial as DDT is one of the “persistent organic pollutants” – which means that it doesn't easily break down into harmless components, but stay as “residues” in the areas sprayed. This then helps reduce the number of malaria carrying mosquitoes.

3. New artemisinin-based combination therapies have been effective in treating malaria that is resistant to chloroquine. Artemisinin is based on a herbal remedy that was used in China for malaria.

4. Intermittent preventive treatment (IPT) for pregnant women and infants – as it is important to try and protect the unborn baby from the malaria parasites as well as protect it from side effects of the anti-malarial medicines.

5. Malaria vaccine research which is ongoing but could still take many years to develop.

Source: Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, 2006.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT...

HIV and AIDS in the workplace

1 Fear that anti-retroviral therapy will increase the appetite for food where none is available is the most significant obstacle to treatment adherence, according to Rwandan people with HIV questioned in a survey published in the October 24th edition of the journal AIDS.

Source: Aidsmap.com; AU JT et al. Access to adequate nutrition is a major potential obstacle to antiretroviral adherence among HIV-infected individuals in Rwanda. AIDS 20 (16): 2116-2118, 2006

Editorial comment: This phenomenon has not been studied or recorded in South Africa.

It does indicate that if provision is made for access to antiretroviral therapy, whether through a medical aid or the public health

system, then simultaneous provision should be made for the provision of access to more nutritious food.

2 A study of over a thousand untreated HIV-infected patients in the Cape Town area has found that patients with CD4 cell counts of 200-350 cells/μL were more likely to develop AIDS more quickly or die when compared to similar patients from Europe and Australia.

The researchers hope that findings from this study will help to revise present criteria for the start of antiretroviral therapy towards an earlier start of treatment in resource-limited settings.

Source: Adapted from The Lancet, October 7, 2006

Editorial comment: The present recommended criteria for initiating

antiretroviral therapy (ART) are based on the World Health Organisation's (WHO) staging from Stage I to Stage IV.

The recommended CD4 cell count for starting antiretroviral therapy is 200 cells/μL, and this is used in the Department of Health's Comprehensive HIV and AIDS Care, Treatment and Management Plan.

It may be that an HIV-infected employee whose CD4 cell count is at the level of 200-350 cells/μL should be assessed by an experienced healthcare practitioner for possible initiation of ART.

This may help increase an infected employee's lifespan and productivity and decrease absenteeism and sick leave.

THIS SUMMER – RECREATIONAL WATER SAFETY

At the beach, in the pool

For fitness and fun, swimming is one of summer's top activities. Summer is also, however, when most drownings occur.

People who have not grown up with a culture of recreational swimming and small children are at greatest risk.

Remember, children can drown in just 4cm of water within a few minutes. Irreversible brain damage could occur in those few minutes.

PRECAUTIONS:

■ **Always supervise children**, especially the young, near water. Even if they can swim they still need to be watched. An adult should always be at an arms length from a child no matter what the depth of the water.

■ **Never rely on floatation** devices or swimming lessons to protect your young child.

■ **Do not prop pool fence gates open.** Many children have drowned in fenced pools because someone left the gate open. If you don't have a fence ensure you have a safety net over your pool.

■ **If you live near rivers, dams or vleis**, which cannot be fenced, ensure you have a fence around your property. Always know where your children are.

DIVING:

Diving accidents are a leading cause of head, neck, and spinal cord injuries – and 90% of all diving injuries result in quadriplegia (both arms and legs paralysed).

■ **Always get into the water feet first** to test the depth. The *minimum* safe depth is 91.5 cm.

■ **Never dive into an open-ground** swimming pool.

■ **Avoid diving from the sides** of a pool.

■ **Look for and obey "No Diving" signs.**

■ **Use a diving board** only if the areas in front of, below, and to the sides of the board are deep enough that you will not strike the bottom, regardless of the depth of the water.

■ **Check for rocks, glass** and other sharp objects before diving into a lake or river.

■ **Don't drink and swim or dive. Alcohol impairs your judgment and coordination.**

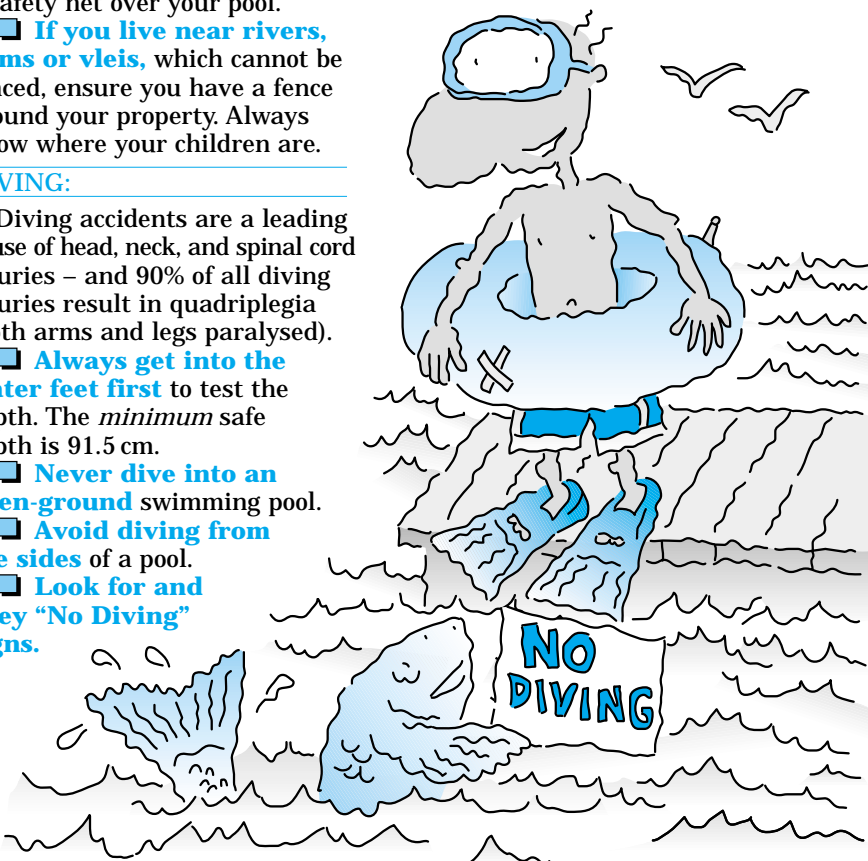
GENERAL

■ **Never swim by yourself** no matter how good a swimmer you are.

■ **If you are just learning to swim** stay in shallow water. It is recommended that you never swim at night in the sea, a lake, a river, a dam or an unlighted swimming pool.

■ **All passengers, including the driver**, should wear life jackets if you are boating or water skiing. ✓

Source: ThinkFirst, the National Injury Prevention Foundation; National Sea Rescue Institute; <http://www.childsafe.org.za/nwater.htm>



YOUR OWN "STRICTLY COME DANCING"

From tango to two-step, dancing is a fun way for couples/friends to stay fit together.

Depending upon your weight and the intensity of dancing, you can burn a significant number of kilojoules (calories) in an hour.

Twenty minutes of nonstop dancing would give similar cardiovascular benefits as would low-level aerobics.

Dancing also improves your balance and flexibility, keeps your bones strong, and helps increase the so-called "feel good" brain chemicals.

A tip for beginners: Wear loose-fitting clothes and flat, comfortable shoes. Men should avoid ties and tight belts, and women, especially beginners, need to leave high heels at home.

Find a reputable teacher if you're going to take lessons.

Check with your doctor first if you've been inactive for a long time and plan to start taking dancing lessons. ✓

Source: Adapted from dancescape.org

Hair loss and hair damage

Each person can normally lose as much as 100 hairs a day from the head and the body.

The hair loss that many men experience is called "male pattern balding" and it is usually an inherited condition.

Exposure to the South African environment (e.g. harsh sun) can also damage hair. Chemical treatments or hair straighteners also damage hair making it break easily.

Blow-drying hair and heated tongs may cause damage when used frequently. Tight braids and certain tight hair bands may also pull on the hair roots, break the hairs and eventually cause bald spots. Tight braids can also cause headaches. ✓

Source: WPM R&D

health yourself

PREVENTING MALARIA...

Taking precautions against mosquitoes

The ideal is to not have to treat or control malaria but to prevent it. Malaria mosquitoes only bite after dark.

TO PROTECT YOURSELF FROM MOSQUITO BITES:

- **Wear long sleeves and trousers** in the late afternoon and night, stay indoors if possible.
- **Use an insect repellent** on exposed skin.
- **Apply repellent to clothes** for additional protection, as mosquitoes will often bite through clothes. Aerosol-type insect repellents can be sprayed onto the clothes and often also give more effective coverage of exposed skin than a "stick" or "roll on". ("Sticks" and "roll-ons" are useful for application to areas such as the face, where an aerosol may affect sensitive areas and the eyes.)
- **Sleep under an insecticide** impregnated mosquito net or in a netted tent or hut or in a house or caravan with door and window screens.
- **Close windows and doors at night.**
- **Spray insecticide aerosol and/or burn** a mosquito coil at night. Be very careful of using mosquito coils in tents made of synthetic materials.

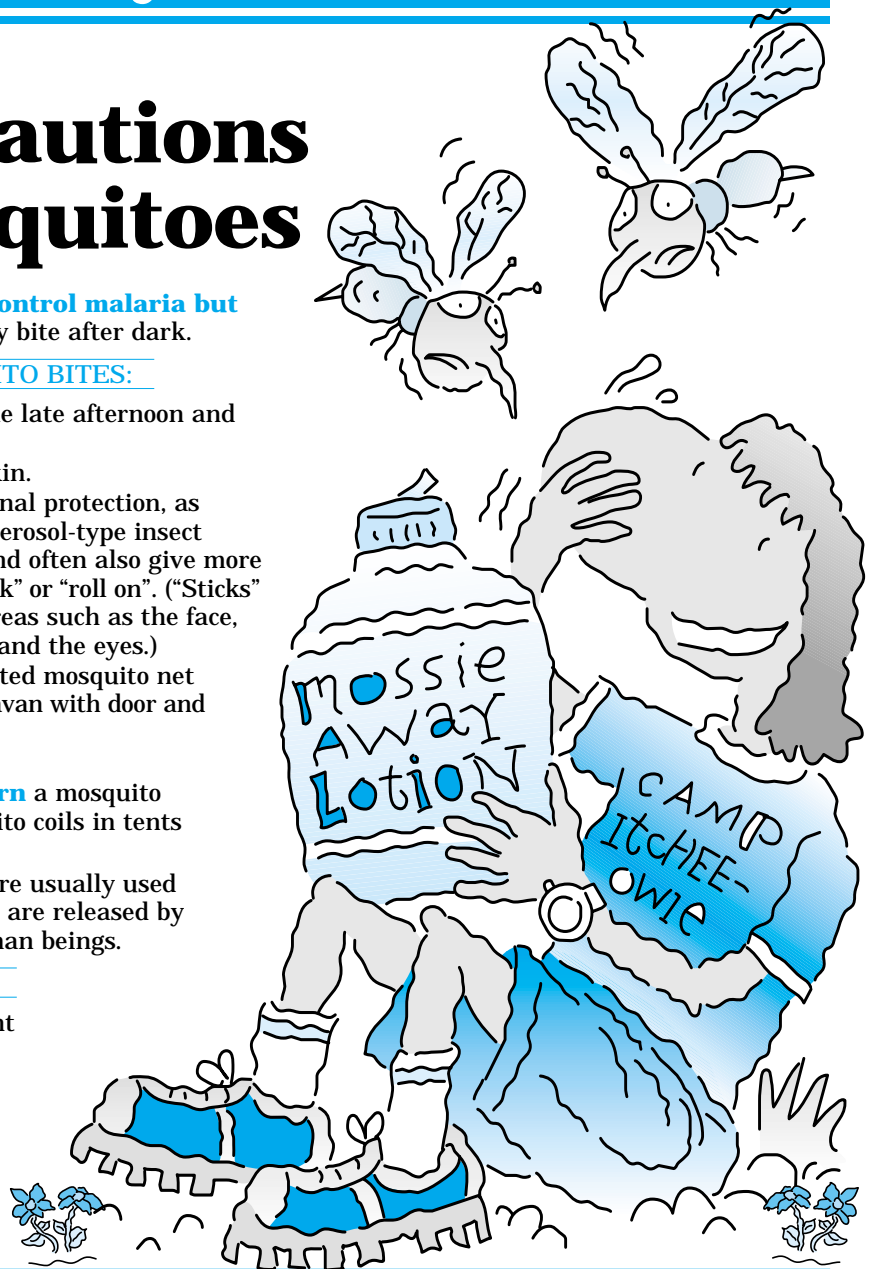
Note: The pyrethroids (insecticides) that are usually used for insecticide treated nets (and clothes) and are released by mosquito coils, have very low toxicity to human beings.

MEDICAL PREVENTION OF MALARIA:

Several medications can effectively prevent infection with malaria and it's vital to take these correctly even if all other precautions against being bitten have been taken.

Your pharmacist can help work out which of the medications is most suitable for you and for the area you're going to. ✓

Source: Adapted from www.malaria.org.za



How to remove a tick

Certain ticks can cause "tick bite fever" by transmitting bacteria called "Rickettsia".

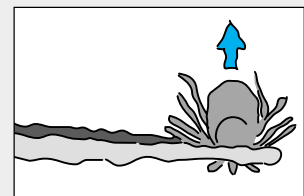
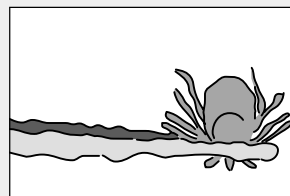
If you do find a tick on your body, remove it from your skin as soon as possible.

Use a fine-tipped (but not sharp) tweezers to firmly grasp the tick very close to the skin, preferably over the tick's head if this can be seen.

With a slow steady motion, gently pull the tick's body away from the skin, without twisting. Avoid crushing the tick's body while doing this.

Don't use petroleum jelly, a hot match, nail polish, or other products to try and remove a tick.

Should the tick's mouthparts remain in the skin, attempt to remove them without damaging the surrounding area. If this is not possible, leave them.



If the mouthparts are separated from the rest of the tick, it can no longer transmit bacteria into the body.

Avoid scratching the area, as this could cause an infection of the skin. The mouthparts will come out as the layers of the skin get replaced in the normal way.

Once the tick has been removed, wash your hands and clean the skin with soap and warm water.

Destroy the tick and dispose of the body. ✖

Source: Adapted from Centres for Disease Control and Prevention

CHILDREN & THE INTERNET... What every parent should know

One thing you can do to try and keep your children safe in cyberspace is to learn as much as possible about the acronyms used in chat rooms, e-mails, and SMSs. Some of the most common ones:



- PAW**Parents are watching
PALParents are listening
POSParents over the shoulder
PIR.....Parents in room
P911.....Parent alert
ASLAge-sex-location
MorFMale or Female
KFYKiss for you
WYCM.....Will you call me
LMIRLLet's meet in real life
SYTSee you tonight. 📧

Source: National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC); <http://www.ncmec.org>

body, mind & soul

“Don't overlook life's small joys while searching for the big ones.”

— Unknown

“There are only two people who can tell you the truth about yourself: an enemy who has lost his temper and a friend who loves you dearly.”

— Antisthenes

“Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around.”

— Leo Buscaglia

work-life

Are you a “WAB”-er?

A fairly new expression is starting to do the rounds and it is: “WAB”-ing. WAB stands for “Work Avoidance Behaviour” and it can be done at home or at work.

WAB-ing is what happens when instead of doing the thing you're supposed to be doing, you start doing something else instead.

For example, instead of completing a report, you start rearranging the books in your bookshelf. Sometimes WAB is a stress response; sometimes it is deliberate so that at the point when meeting a deadline almost becomes a crisis, you suddenly become galvanised into action; and sometimes, it's well, just plain

old-fashioned laziness or boredom.

WAB-ing is more than just procrastination or time management, it's got a lot to do with motivation and purpose.

When a person indulges in WAB-ing at home, their family or friends are the only ones who may have to live with the consequences.

However if a person is WAB-ing on the job, it may have consequences for the organisation. Besides which, job descriptions don't include WAB-ing and salaries aren't paid for avoiding work. 📧

Source: WPM R&D; Commonwealth of Australia, 1993; M McCann, 2003; University of Minnesota Duluth

BE A FRIEND...

Take the keys

Try these tips to take the keys from an impaired driver:

- Calmly suggest that someone else drive or they take a taxi.
- Make light of the situation.
- Make it sound like you're doing them a favour.
- Tell them you will not go with them.
- Take the keys while they aren't paying attention. They'll think they've lost them.
- Avoid embarrassment and confrontation. ✓

Source: Hope Heart Institute; National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

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