

family corner

All A-Bored?

Is this a frequent conversation in your home?

Mom: Where you going tonight?

Teen: Mike's house.

Mom: What are you going to do?

Teen: I don't know... hang out.

Mom: Who else is coming?

Teen: Bunch of people.

Mom: Is it a party?

Teen: No, we're just hanging out.

Tired of this? Believe it or not, your teenagers and pre-teens are tired of it as well; they're bored. We don't want to over-book their free time but they struggle with using their leisure time constructively. Bored adolescents are more at-risk for giving in to or seeking out drugs and alcohol. What can we do as parents?

Do you remember why we chose the suburbs/North Shore to raise our families? We chose it for the great schools, safety, and the proximity to Chicago for both work and play. We need to utilize the city as a teaching opportunity for our teenagers. Many parents are fearful of allowing their teens to venture into Chicago alone. As parents, we must teach them ourselves. The holiday season is a great time to start. There are lots of things to do, shows to see, and the decorations are a sight to behold.

There are multiple benefits to allowing them to spend an afternoon in Chicago. It builds confidence, independence, public awareness, fulfills adventurous urges, fights boredom, and keeps them out of malls and boring basements.

A sense of confidence and independence are qualities we all want for our children. We send them off to college and presume that they have the skills necessary to adapt and survive in that environment. Sleep away camp is not the Magnificent Mile! We must take them to the city *ourselves* on public transportation. The El, Metra, buses, and cabs are not merely ways of getting to work; these are ways to get to entertainment independently. Kids find the El fun and exciting! Don't just tell them how to get there, do it with them. It's a great family outing and is experiential learning for them.

Point out landmarks as you travel, assess their sense of direction, and have them direct how to get to the train station and back home. This also prepares them for driving to the city someday; that can be daunting for anyone. Show them the venues you approve of them to visit and how to get there. For example, Wrigley Field, Lincoln Park Zoo, Water Tower Place, the Magnificent Mile,

Navy Pier, Millennium Park, and the Art Institute to name a few. All of these hold the interest of pre-teens and teenagers. Stepping out of their comfort zone builds confidence and the independence we want for them. It also comforts us, to know that they are able to navigate through the world without us by their side. (Of course, they will have cell phones fully charged so they can call us periodically and we can reach them.)

As you are with them in their training sessions, point out what you consider to be potential hazards and how to deal with them. For example, it is important to walk with an air of confidence and a sense of purpose. This isn't necessarily something we think to teach as we walk through a mall with our kids.

It's also an opportunity to transmit your values to your teen AND learn what their values are. Do you give money to homeless people or do you prefer not to? It is up to you. In addition to building family memories, you are learning about your child and developing a new trust level. They appreciate being treated as more grown-up/adult.

Again, I can't emphasize enough the benefits of getting out of the basement and mall. Walking through a mall provides a false sense of security. "Mall rats" feel at home in the mall walking back and forth. They talk to kids they would not necessarily talk to and "meet people." You don't just randomly start talking to people on Michigan Avenue while shopping and exchange cell phone numbers. Why does it feel "OK" to do that in a mall with someone from another school?

Although there is a lot "Happening" in the suburbs, it's not always enough for our teens. Bowling, movies, video games, and extra-curricular activities are fun and have their place. Occasionally getting out of the community fulfills the adventurous spirit of adolescents in a constructive way, as well. We need to provide our teens with attractive alternatives that will make illicit activities less attractive. We need to teach them "the city" as we would like them to know it. In the long run, this reduces our own parental anxiety as we send them out into the world. Someday when the limo drops the prom or homecoming group at Second City... your child will actually *know* where they are.

Contributed by Diane Karlins, LCSW, ACSW. Karlins is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker with North Shore Wellness Center in Northbrook. She can be reached at ddkarlins@gmail.com.

Q&A

with dr. lisa sullivan

Eczema is a common skin condition during the winter affecting all age groups. It's a problem of unbearable itching and scratching that can lead to irritability, insomnia, and unsightly skin rashes.

What is eczema?

Eczema is a broad term used to describe sensitive skin. Health care providers like to think of eczema as the "itch that rashes," in that it usually starts with an intense itching sensation, followed by scratching which triggers the rash. The rash can have varying appearances but is typically a mixture of redness, small bumps, and dry scaly patches (that can bleed when scratched and then darken and thicken the skin over time). Once the rash appears, it triggers more itching and scratching, perpetuating the cycle. Rashes also put the skin in a vulnerable state, prone to secondary infections from bacteria, fungi, and viruses.

What causes the eczema itch?

Many external and internal factors can trigger the eczema itch including: dry skin, irritants (fragrance, dyes, treated fabrics, nail polish), nickel (costume jewelry, zippers/fasteners, coins), foods, environmental allergens (pollen, dander, dust mite), latex, smoke/pollution, weather/barometric pressure changes, extremes in temperature and humidity levels, illness, hormonal imbalance (e.g., menopause), and stress/anxiety/emotion. Individuals with eczema may

have any variety, or all, of these triggers and will find that they are additive when exposed to more than one trigger at a time.

Are there different types of eczema?

Eczema can be classified according to the skin's immune response to different types of triggers. Many people with eczema have features of more than one type. Atopic dermatitis, for example, refers to eczema triggered by food and environmental allergy and is more common in childhood. Contact dermatitis is caused by gradual sensitization (allergy) over time to chemicals or products (e.g., hair dye, nickel, fragrance, formaldehyde, leather tanners) that come in contact with the skin, so it's seen more in adulthood. Seborrheic dermatitis is eczema with additional waxy flakes that's both triggered and infected by fungus. It tends to appear in infancy (cradle cap) and in middle-aged men (dandruff). Non-atopic dermatitis is a general term referring to eczema rashes from other non-allergic and non-infectious triggers such as weather, dry skin, hormones, and stress. This type usually coexists with other forms of eczema, suggesting that these triggers are universal aggravators of the skin. Impetigo (skin bacterial infection), ringworm (skin fungal infection), and warts/molluscum (skin viral infections) are not eczema but often take advantage of eczematous skin due to the disruption of the healthy skin barrier.

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North Shore Senior Center

Holiday Celebration with the Senior Stompers – Sunday, Dec. 6, 2-3:30pm. North Shore Senior Center's very own *Senior Stompers* play tried and true old favorites tuned to warm memories. Fee: \$10/NSSC members and others.

Free Men's Club Programs

Tuesdays 10:30-11:30am. Women and Guests Always Welcome.

Dec. 8 – The History of Texas from the Air. David Buisseret will highlight with aerial images some of Texas' historical sites such as Indian locales, stagecoach routes, frontier forts, and disastrous hurricanes.

Dec. 15 – Elderhostel: Adventures in Lifelong Learning. Donald Nylin, a volunteer Elderhostel Ambassador, is a veteran of more than 65 Elderhostel adventures.

Dec. 22 – The Story Behind the Ferris Wheel at Chicago's 1893 Columbian Exposition. John Glavin, author of *Trapped on the Wheel*, will discuss the planning and purpose of the Ferris Wheel, its performance at the Columbian Exposition, its aftermath in St. Louis, and the fate of the Wheel and Mr. Ferris. Copies of *Trapped on the Wheel* will be available after the presentation for purchase and autograph.

General Events

Praise the Lord and Pass the Ammunition: Popular Songs as Propaganda – Monday, Dec. 7, 1-2:30 pm. The power of music as propaganda was clearly and powerfully demonstrated during World War II, as a host of patriotic and popular singers and songwriters contributed their talents. Michael Vaughan, Ph.D., National-Louis University, facilitates this day of remembrance. Fee: \$8/M; \$10/NM.

Meditation Practices to Avoid Holiday Overindulging – Monday, Dec. 7, 1-2:30pm. Om Johari, Ph.D., shares how meditation can offer benefits to everyone, such as reducing stress, improving health, and improving one's mood. Fee: \$6/M; \$8/NM.

"Winter Soups and Stews" with Chef Dawn Dlugosz – Tuesday, Dec. 8, 12-1:30pm. Chef Dawn, Owner & Executive Chef, A New Dawn Cooking School, will show you how to prepare

several hearty and delicious soups and stews that will keep you warm all winter long. Fee: \$34/M; \$40/NM. Class takes place at A New Dawn Cooking School, Whole Foods Market, 840 Willow Rd., Northbrook. To register, call 847-784-6030.

100 Days: FDR in 1933 – Three Sessions, Thursday, Dec. 3, 10, 17, 9:30-11:30 am. Jim Kenney, executive director of Common Ground, discusses Jonathan Alter's recent book, *The Defining Moment* and the notion that presidents and presidencies can be judged on the basis of the first one hundred days of a new administration. Fee: \$26/M; \$32/NM.

Cary Grant: Suavity and Sophistication – Three sessions, Friday, Dec. 4, 11, 18, 1-3pm. Joe Cunniff, M.Ed., Loyola University, shares with the secrets of Grant's success in three wonderful films. The first is a classic screwball comedy, *Bringing Up Baby* with Katherine Hepburn. In week two, you'll view *Houseboat* with the beautiful Sophia Loren. The last week will feature *Indiscreet*, the romantic comedy set in London with Ingrid Bergman and directed by Stanley Donen. Fee: \$24/M; \$30/NM.

Chicago Holiday Lights Spectacular – Friday, Dec. 18, 3:30-10pm. Board your deluxe motor coach with popular tour guide Bill Hinchliff at North Shore Senior Center for a special evening that explores Chicago at holiday time. Visit Daley Plaza, Macy's Holiday Windows, Macy's Walnut Room, Buckingham Fountain, Michigan Avenue, Millennium Park, and end at Lincoln Park Zoo's ZooLights Festival. Finally, dine at the Greek Islands Restaurant, board your motor coach and return to North Shore Senior Center. Fee: \$75/M; \$90/NM. Includes all tours, dinner and deluxe motor coach. Call 847-784-6030 for information and reservations.

North Shore Senior Center is located at 161 Northfield Rd., Northfield. For information and to make reservations, call 847-784-6030 weekdays, 9am-4pm or visit NSSC.org.

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