



OUTREACH & EXTENSION
UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI
LINCOLN UNIVERSITY

Vol. 4, No. 2 • March/April 2002

Life Times

A bimonthly publication to enhance the quality of life of individuals, families, and communities

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Urban Youth & Family Specialist



Extension's Mission

University Outreach and Extension serves Missouri by extending research-based knowledge and high-quality educational programs to address the high-priority needs of citizens at the local level.

Childhood asthma: You can make a difference!

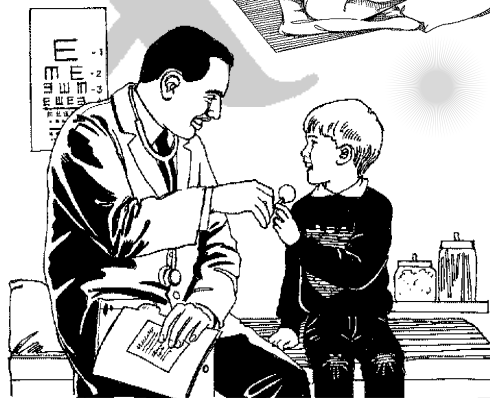
Rebecca Blocker
Environmental Design Specialist
 BlockerR@missouri.edu

Allergies and asthma are nothing to sneeze at!

Five million children in the U.S. have been diagnosed with asthma. That means one in every 13 children suffers with this disease. Asthma causes more hospital stays than any other childhood disease—about 15,000 hospitalizations per year. It is the leading cause of school absenteeism, forcing children to miss more than 10 million days of school per year.

Since 1980 the number of children with asthma has more than doubled, with the highest impact on children, minorities and low-income groups. It is considered an epidemic. Last year, 5,000 people died fighting asthma, and 2 million more needed immediate care from hospital emergency rooms. Surprisingly, many of these attacks could have been prevented.

Many medical options are available to treat asthma, but it's important to know there are also lifestyle strategies and cleaning practices that can help keep allergies and asthma under control.



Many things can trigger asthma. Common triggers include secondhand smoke, house dust, dust mites, pets, molds and pests.

If your child suffers from allergies or asthma, consider these home allergy-control techniques. Even small changes can make a big difference to a child with allergies or asthma.

Secondhand smoke

Asthma can be triggered by the smoke from the burning end of a cigarette, pipe or cigar and the smoke breathed out by a smoker.

Choose not to smoke in your home or car, and do not allow others to do so either.

Dust mites

Dust mites are too small to be seen, but are found in every home. They live in mattresses, pillows, carpets,

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Youth

What's your child's financial personality type?

Find out your child's financial personality type by answering "yes" or "no" to the following:

1. If you give your child money, does he or she save it?
2. Does your child lose or misplace money often?
3. Do you often hear the words "I want, I want" when you go shopping with your youngster?
4. If you ask your young one, "Why do you want this?" does he or she often say, "Because Johnny has one" or "I saw it on TV"?
5. Is your child reluctant to spend any of his or her own money?
6. Does your child get exceptional pleasure in seeing a bank account grow?
7. If your child sees a penny on the ground, will he go out of his way to pick it up?
8. Does your child decide to save for a special toy, and then later choose not to buy the toy?
9. If you say no to the suggestion of stopping for ice cream or pizza, does your child ask, "Can we stop, if I pay for it?"
10. When you travel, does your youngster want to bring presents back for all her friends?

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Mom, just write a check!

Sandra McKinnon

Consumer & Family Economics Specialist/Warren County CPD
MckinnonS@missouri.edu

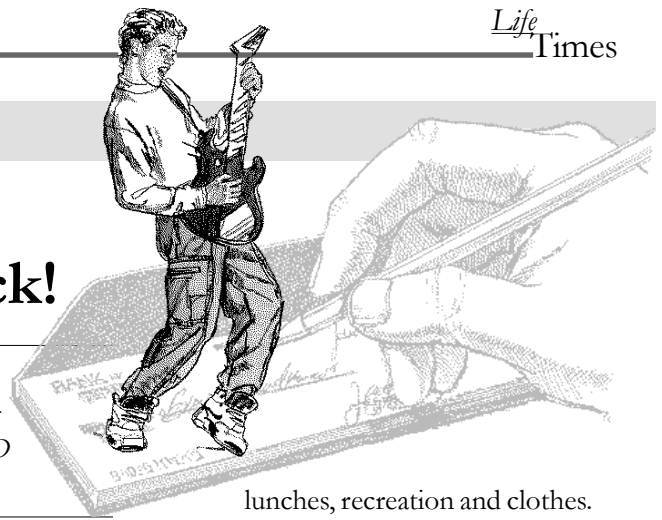
Do your children have only one clear understanding of money—how to spend it? Do you hear, "Mom, just write a check," when at the store? Children, as well as adults, need to learn the uses and values of money, along with the responsibility that comes with it.

By the time teenagers graduate from high school, we expect them to be ready to handle their finances. We hope they have all the knowledge needed to use money wisely, yet reaching adulthood with the insight and incentive to be a good money manager does not just happen.

It takes a commitment on the part of parents to raise their children with the knowledge, skills and motivation to maintain control of their financial resources.

To raise money-smart kids, try the following:

- **Give them an allowance.** Children do not learn by osmosis when it comes to money. They need hands-on practice.
- **Explain the difference between wants and needs.** Let kids know your first responsibility is to provide for the family's needs.
- **Involve children when planning the family budget.** As they get older, children can set up their own budget and cover certain expenses such as



lunches, recreation and clothes.

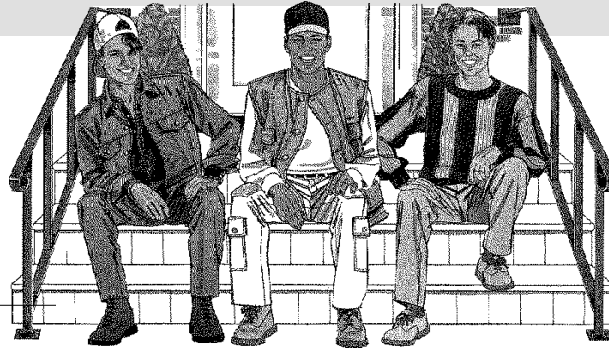
- **Involve all members of the family as you comparison shop.** This is especially important when making a major purchase, like a television or refrigerator.
- **Encourage the habit of saving.** It may be one of the most valuable lessons they learn.
- **Let children make mistakes with their money.** Although it's tough to see children waste money, it may not be wasted if they learn a lesson from having made a poor decision.
- **Talk to kids about how you make and spend money.** You work hard for your money, so explain that to them.
- **Explain that cash from the ATM machine is not magic money.** The same goes for checks and credit cards.
- **Set a good example.** Children take their money cues from their parents. If you earn, spend and save wisely, your children are more likely to be "money smart" also.
- **Children grow in their ability to manage money.** Don't expect more than their age and stage of development permit.
- **Never use money as a reward or punishment.**

Parents who teach their children to manage money wisely give a priceless gift. Remember three hints to help your child: *patience, practice, and praise.*



Adolescence: Can you remember when . . . ?

Rosilee Trotta, LCSW
Urban Youth & Family Specialist
TrottaR@missouri.edu



Once I gave a workshop to a group of parents at a middle school in St. Louis. I thought it was going pretty well until one of the mothers accused me of “siding with the kids, rather than with the parents.”

Actually, the attack was pretty vicious, and I soon had a whole group joining with my assailant. There were obviously some very distraught parents struggling with 13- and 14-year-olds.

I had been discussing developmental stages of the adolescent, and I had probably mentioned several times how difficult it was to be a teen. That was more than my vocal mother could stand.

“My son does nothing,” she shouted at me. “I can’t even get him to empty the trash. I wish I had a life like that!”

Others, of course, had similar examples.

I let them all vent for a few minutes, then asked them to close their eyes and think back to when they were 14. I asked them to be open-minded and honest. The change in the room was dramatic. Even the loudest softened.

We forget, sometimes, how difficult it is to be a teen. Hormones rage, doubt and uncertainty rule, and relationships—especially with parents—are uneven at best. Adolescents rarely know who they are or where they are going. Confusion reigns.

My son, Todd, depicted life as a teenager very well in a paper he wrote

for a class in Adolescent Development. Todd is getting his Masters in Education and has been working with teens for the last several years. To add to his credibility, Todd is not that far removed from adolescence himself. In fact, I suspect that some of the following excerpts from his paper are based on his own experiences:

① “At the top of the stairs you listen intently for sounds of your parents in the kitchen. Not hearing the newspaper ruffle or utensils clinking against the side of a dish, you feel the coast is clear.

Upon entering the kitchen, you are horrified at the sight of your mother peering into the pantry. You quickly make yourself busy by grabbing the pop-tarts above the cabinet and study, with mock interest, the nutritional facts on the side of the box. Nonetheless, your mom still decides to say, ‘Good morning.’

You force a reply out of your mouth, emitting a sound that more closely resembles a bobcat dying a slow death than a morning salutation. Happily, your mother accepts your grunt without saying the infernal and most annoying clarifying term: ‘What?’

With your father’s arrival, you feel claustrophobic. He is wearing khaki shorts with navy socks pulled up to his knees. You make a mental note to never do that – **ever!**”

② “At the end of the day, as you and your over-stuffed book bag make your way towards the car, you pause for a moment and stare at the stu-

dents who run past you in their track uniforms. They whoosh by in a confident column of elbows, knees and tacky colors. You had always been on the track team. You had thought you would be on the track team again this year—but your parents decided to play a cruel trick. Usually when you announce a team tryout, they stay on your case until you actually sign up. They remind you **against your will**, question you **against your will**, interrogate you **against your will**, and ensure that you get to the tryout **against your will**.

But, this year they did not. You didn’t understand. I mean, you told them, just like always. But did they hound you? No! Did they pester you? No! **DID THEY MAKE SURE YOU GOT TO THE TRYOUTS AND ON THE TEAM? NO!** It was the cruelest trick. But, you have more time for homework now.”

③ “When your parents come home and ask if you have done your homework, you shout down from your room that you have. You take some secret satisfaction in the lie. They insist that you do schoolwork during the two hours you have to yourself in the house. They always used to check to make sure, but they stopped. Though you always do your homework, there is something pleasing in the notion that you do not do it when they want you to. And you think you are fooling them. And this makes everyone happy—happy enough to endure each other.”

Being the parent of a teen is challenging and difficult. But being a teen is even harder. The best I can advise is that parents take adolescence in stride by refusing to take snubs and affronts personally. Your teen needs you as much as ever. Stay involved in their lives, and try to remember when . . .

Excerpts (1), (2) and (3) from *A Day in the Life of Adolescence* by Todd Trotta.

Childhood asthma: You can make a difference!

(continued from page 1)

fabric-covered furniture, bedding, clothes and stuffed toys. To control dust mites:

- Wash the child's sheets and blankets once a week in hot water.
- Wash stuffed toys often; dry thoroughly. Keep stuffed toys off beds.
- Cover mattresses and pillows in dust-proof (allergen-impermeable) zippered covers.

House dust

Common house dust may contain asthma triggers. Remove dust often with a damp cloth. Use wet cleaning whenever possible on floors.

Vacuum fabric-covered furniture and carpets frequently. Use vacuums with high efficiency or HEPA filters, or a central vacuum system.

Allergic people should leave the area being vacuumed for two hours, if possible.

Pets

Your pet's skin flakes, urine and saliva could all be asthma triggers to your child. (This is especially true of furry and feathered pets.)

- Consider keeping pets outdoors or, if necessary, even finding a new home for your pets.
- Keep pets out of the bedroom and sleeping areas at all times, and keep the door closed.
- Keep pets away from fabric-covered furniture, carpets and stuffed toys.

Molds

Molds grow on damp materials. The key to mold control is moisture control. If moisture is a problem in your home, clean up the mold and get rid of the excess moisture. Lowering the moisture also helps reduce other triggers, such as dust mites and cockroaches. To control mold:

- Wash molds from hard surfaces with a detergent and bleach solution. Absorbent materials with mold, such as ceiling tiles and carpet, may need to be replaced.

- Keep drip pans in air conditioner, refrigerator and dehumidifier clean and dry.
- Use exhaust fans or open windows in kitchen and bath rooms when showering, cooking or using the dishwasher. Vent clothes dryers to the outside.

Pests

Droppings or body parts of pests, such as cockroaches or rodents, can be asthma triggers. To control pests:

- Store food in airtight containers.
- Clean all food crumbs or spilled liquids right away.
- Try using poison baits, boric acid (for cockroaches) or traps first before using pesticidal sprays.

See your doctor or health care provider for more information on allergies and asthma. Contact your local University Outreach and Extension office for more ways to control moisture in your home and reduce allergy triggers.

What is your child's financial personality type?

(continued from page 2)

If you answered "yes" to questions 1, 5, 6, 7 and 8, you have a *saver* on your hands. A "yes" answer to questions 2, 3, 4, 9 and 10 show you have a full-fledged *spender* in the family. Which of the two personality types is your child?

Reaching adulthood with the insight and incentive to be a good money manager does not just happen. It takes a commitment on the part of parents.

Start early to teach children about money. Encourage them to budget. Set a good example for your children. If you earn, spend and save wisely, your children are more likely to be "money smart" also.

For more information, visit the following web sites with your children:

<http://www.ext.nodak.edu/extnews/pipeline/d-parent.htm>

<http://www.theyoungamericans.org/>

<http://www.jumpstart.org/>

LifeTimes

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Regional Specialists:

Content Editor

Linda S. Rellergert

Linda S. Rellergert
St. Charles Extension Center
260 Brown Road
St. Peters, MO 63376
636/970-3000
E-mail: RellergertL@missouri.edu

Consumer and Family Economics

Sherron Hancock, 636/797-5391
Sandra McKinnon, 636/456-3444
Suzanne Zemelman, 636/970-3000

Environmental Design

Rebecca Blocker, 573/756-4539
Sharon Laux, 314/516-5240

Human Development

Maudie Kelly, 573/438-2671
Teresa Mareschal, 636/970-3000
Betty Reinsch, 314/615-7605

Nutrition

Cynthia Fauser, 314/615-2911
Damaris Karanja, 314/615-2911
Linda Rellergert, 636/970-3000
Mary Schroeppfer, 636/583-5141

Urban Youth & Family

Rosilee Trotta, 314/615-7637

Coordinating Editor

Roxanne T. Miller, 314/615-7607

Design: Kathy Maddox

Web: outreach.missouri.edu

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