

# Griffith Connections



Griffith Connections is a project of Griffith Child Care centre Inc. funded by the Department of Family and Community Services under the Local Answers Program

An Australian Government Initiative

A bimonthly Newsletter

July/August 2009

**Griffith Connections is a parent information and support project of Griffith Child Care Centre Inc. The aim is to provide information in a variety of formats - regular newsletters available at local early childhood services and other locations across the community, parent workshops held each month - 123 Magic, Resilience, Toddler Taming, Parent Effectiveness Training parent meetings - Dad's group held once a month and one to one support for families in crisis or needing that extra bit of support. Our family support worker is available for one to one support - please contact 69626833.**

This newsletter's aim is to provide a variety of information to enable parents to make informed choices about how they raise their children. It is provided free across the community and includes information on agencies that support families and how they can be accessed. If you would like to include information or want an issue covered just contact us on 69626833 or email dotwaidecentre@gmail.com

Hi and welcome to winter. It's that time of year again when we start suffering symptoms of the dreaded common cold and now we have the Swine Flu to contend with! It is particularly important at this time to be aware about the facts about the common cold and flu for both children and adults.

## The Common Cold

This information comes from the National Prescribing Service (NPS.org.au). Their message is that viral infections such as colds get better without antibiotic intervention. All you need is rest and time to get over a cold, watch for other symptoms of other illnesses, but essentially let the cold run its course. Cut down on the risk of infecting others by limiting contact in the early days of infection.

It appears that our constant reliance on antibiotics to solve viral infections is beginning to cause other problems as viruses are not impacted by antibiotics, yet bacteria are. The more we use antibiotics to try and fix viral infections the less effective these medicines are when they are used to fight infections caused by bacteria.

### Will antibiotics help?

Common colds, flu and most coughs are **caused by viruses** and generally get better on their own. Antibiotics only work on infections caused by bacteria, and **have no effect on viruses**. Your immune system can fight and overcome these viruses.

### Antibiotics Will Not

- help a cold get better faster
- stop a cold from getting worse
- stop a cold spreading to other people.

Using antibiotics when they are not needed may make them **less effective when they are needed**. They can also cause unwanted side effects like stomach upsets, diarrhoea,

thrush and allergic reactions.

### Some special cases

Either viruses or bacteria can cause some ear and throat infections, but most will get better on their own. Discuss managing pain relief with your pharmacist or doctor. Complications are rare.

Research shows that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are much more likely to develop complications (e.g. pneumonia and ear damage) from respiratory tract infections. These may involve bacterial infections so antibiotics may be needed more often. You as a parent know your own child/ren better than anyone and will generally be able to



gauge when symptoms require medical intervention. Parents should take their children to the doctor if the symptoms come on suddenly, are severe or last longer than usual.

### Common colds: Green snot = good! Sorting facts from fiction

Cold symptoms such as sneezing, a sniffle, headache or sore throat usually began one to two days after contact with a common colds

virus. The next set of symptoms may include a thick snotty nose and a cough. Many myths still surround this common ailment. A snotty nose – particularly the onset of green and yellow mucus – is actually a sign that your child's immune system is fighting the infection, but many parents believe it is a sign their child's cold is getting worse. A cough is often the last symptom to improve and can last up to two weeks longer than the other symptoms.

A child could get between 5 and 10 colds per year and could be infectious before symptoms appeared and even after most symptoms cleared up. It is quite practical for children with colds to attend childcare, preschool and school if they feel well enough to participate because colds rarely lead to more serious illnesses.

Despite the frequency of common colds, there are some good hygiene practices parents and carers can undertake to minimise the risk:

- Ensure children wash their hands with soap, particularly before eating and after blowing their nose
- Encourage children to cover their nose and mouth when sneezing or coughing
- Keep their hands away from their eyes, nose and mouth
- Give them tissues to blow their nose and dispose of them after use
- Avoid sharing cups, glasses and cutlery between children

The best thing parents can do for a child with a cold is to treat their symptoms while their immune system fights the cold and to avoid exposing them to cigarette smoke. NPS recommends rest, but it may also help to drink something soothing, suck on ice or a throat lozenge to ease a cough or sore throat and use saline (salt water) sprays to help clear mucus.

Antibiotics won't help a cold get better faster or stop it spreading to others because they simply don't work on the viruses which cause common colds," Ms Kaye said.

If cold symptoms come on suddenly, are

severe or last longer than usual, Ms Kaye said parents should visit their family doctor for further advice.

**See your doctor if it gets worse**

Common colds may aggravate ongoing medical conditions (e.g. asthma or diabetes). See your doctor if this occurs.

Some serious diseases may initially appear like a cold or flu but may require urgent medical attention. The best thing to do is to see your doctor if the symptoms come on suddenly, are severe or last longer than usual.

See your doctor if you or your child develops **any** of the following:

- temperature higher than 38.5 °C or chills
- neck stiffness
- severe headache
- light hurting the eyes
- chest pain
- shortness of breath, noisy or fast breathing or difficulty breathing
- a skin rash
- pale or mottled skin
- vomiting
- difficulty waking up or unusual drowsiness
- persistent cough
- aching muscles

OR if your child or baby has **any** of the following:

- bulging of the fontanelle (soft spot on top of the baby's head)
- a high temperature (in babies under 6 months of age)
- excessive irritability
- a strange, high-pitched cry
- lack of energy
- loss of appetite/not drinking/feeding poorly
- earache.

## Griffith Connection Update

We have been very busy with our latest visits from Dannielle Miller from Enlighten Education and a return visit from Celia Lashlie.

The response from both these events has again been outstanding and we are please to report that as a result of her recent visit to Griffith, Dannielle has been invited back from schools in both Griffith and Leeton who heard her speak the first time around.

We would like to congratulate the winners of our Gift vouchers from our Celia Lashlie visit. Julie Marsh from Leeton received a \$50 gift voucher from Book Link in Leeton and Tracey Davidson from Griffith also received a \$50 voucher from Book City, Griffith. Thank you to

everyone who entered and returned their evaluations and to Book Link and Book City for being involved.

Our next speaker guest speaker as part of the project is Maggie Dent, who will be in Griffith from Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> July through to Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> July.

Maggie is an author, publisher, professional speaker and consultant specialising in building personal and professional resilience. From an extensive background in education, palliative care, suicide prevention, the funeral industry, ABC radio and running her business "Esteem Plus" – a counselling, training and education centre -Maggie has the unique ability of assisting people from all walks of life build their resilience by quietly improving their lives.

Maggie is regularly called on to advise governments on issues around parenting and supporting children. She works both nationally and internationally. Recently she has become a regular commentator on "Today Show" on the Nine Network. She focuses on building emotional, social and spiritual competency by giving tools and skills that build resilience in a commonsense and practical way.

Maggie will be speaking at the 3 local High School during her visit to Griffith and the key aims and underlying intentions of her program are to:

- Strengthen school spirit
- Build inclusion and understanding
- Create a unique environment that is positive and welcoming
- Improving staff and student resilience
- Enhancing pastoral care of students and all staff
- Reinvigorating the teaching-learning process
- Enthusiastically promoting the realisation of every student's potential
- Ensuring the wellbeing of everyone matters

She will present 2 parent evenings during her stay. One will be **Real Kids In An Unreal World on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> July from 7:30 – 9:30 pm at the Griffith Leagues Club**. This discusses building resilience and self esteem in today's children.

The second evening will be addressing teenagers and is entitled **Adolescence Unplugged on Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> July from 7:30 – 9:30 pm and is also at the Leagues Club**. This addresses understanding the Bumpy Ride from Child to Adult This covers biological changes that influence adolescent thinking, behaviour, emotional and social perceptions – introduces the role of "lighthouses" in adolescent's lives. Tickets for both sessions are \$20 and can be purchased from Book City.

Griffith Connection was a project funded for three years through Local Answers a Federal Government Initiative. The project was due for completion in May 2009, however we have been fortunate to receive continuation funding for another 12 months from July

2009. This will enable us to continue with parent support.

## Prayer for the children

### A Parents Prayer

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Thank you God for  
The children of mine  
Who teach me things?  
That blow my mind.  
They entertain themselves  
In the funniest ways.  
I pray that the innocence  
They possess never goes away.  
I pray they will  
Grow up and be smart,  
And I pray that they will never grow apart.  
I pray that they will call home  
Whenever they are near a phone.  
I pray that they never feel alone.  
I hope they turn to you  
Through guidance and prayer  
And know that you and their parents  
Will always be there.

## Coming Up:

**Family Partnership Training** - a special training program for those who work with children and families. regarded as one of the best non counselling course available and developed By Prof. Hilton Davis at Guys Hospital, London, this special 10 week program is being offered in Griffith through term 3. For full details on enrolment and cost please contact Neville Dwyer 69626833 or visit the website.

## Useful Websites

### Immunisation

[www.immunise.health.gov.au](http://www.immunise.health.gov.au)

### Home Safety:

[www.kidsafe.com.au/](http://www.kidsafe.com.au/)

### Farm Safety

[www.safetyaroundfarmseducation.com](http://www.safetyaroundfarmseducation.com)

### Raising Children

[www.raisingchildren.net.au](http://www.raisingchildren.net.au)

### Child Protection

[www.napcan.org.au](http://www.napcan.org.au)

### Thanks for reading

*Alisha Carroll*

**Griffith Connections Project Officer**