



Fidgeting Habits?

Q. My child will never sit still—he is constantly fidgeting or dashing around, playing with everything in sight. This is challenging for me, especially when we are in public. What's going on?

A. A child that never sits still can present quite a challenge to both parents and teachers at school. To understand what is causing this, it is important to look at how old the child is and in what environments this behavior occurs. Very young children are often highly inquisitive and have short attention spans. However, if fidgeting and distraction occurs in a school-age child in all environments then it may indicate Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). ADHD is a brain-based disorder that can cause difficulty with attention, hyperactivity and impulsivity. The best way to begin evaluating these symptoms is to talk to your child's primary care physician (PCP). The PCP may evaluate and treat your child or refer you to a child psychiatrist if the situation is complex. If the issue is ADHD, options for treatment include a variety of medications as well as behavioral therapy. Some children are able to learn over time how to manage their symptoms without medications. Severe

symptoms may require longer term use of medications for adequate management.

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Darker Permanent Teeth?

Q. My child's permanent teeth are coming in and they are darker than her baby teeth. Is this normal?

A. When permanent teeth begin erupting in children, parents are often shocked by their size and color. However, it is normal for permanent teeth to be darker than primary teeth and once all permanent teeth are in place, this new color will look fine. Teeth are comprised of three basic layers. The center is the pulp, the middle layer is dentin and the outer layer is enamel. Both dentin and enamel come in a range of shades including grays and yellows, but dentin is usually the darker of the two substances. Permanent tooth enamel is semi-translucent, so the dentinal color shows through in the body of the tooth. However, in primary teeth, the pulp is large and the dentin and enamel layers are thin. The enamel in primary teeth is also more opaque due to a less organized crystalline structure. This does a better job masking color in the dentin. The opacity also allows more light to be reflected to the eye, making the tooth appear whiter.

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Torn ACL?

Q. My son tore his ACL. He is eager to get back out on the field. What is the proper treatment plan for this type of injury?

A. An ACL injury is a common knee ligament injury, particularly in athletes. The ACL is not capable of healing itself because ligaments, unlike muscles, do not have their own blood supply. Some may choose to treat a torn ligament non-surgically with a rehabilitation program focusing on muscle strengthening and lifestyle changes. However, surgical reconstruction will help most recover to full function after an ACL tear. These two options are based on the individual's expectations and current lifestyle. Most choose reconstruction in order to return to their full prior level of function. After ACL reconstruction, performing rehabilitative exercises can gradually return full mobility and stability to the knee. At an appropriate time decided by your surgeon and physical therapist, it is important to progress back into running, jumping, sport, leisure or work specific activities. In athletes it is also important to train landing and jumping mechanics and progress into deceleration and acceleration in multiple directions for that particular sport to prevent re-injury. You may also need to use a knee brace for a short time, as it is important not to return to full activity too soon.

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Hand Numbness?

Q. I have pain and numbness in my hands that wakes me from sleep at night. I can shake them, and they feel better. They don't go numb during the day. Should I be concerned?

A. The symptoms you describe are classic for carpal tunnel syndrome. Carpal tunnel syndrome is caused by compression of the median nerve as it courses through the carpal tunnel and enters the palm of the hand. It usually affects the thumb, index, middle and ring fingers by producing numbness and tingling. The underlying cause is variable, but it is commonly associated with tendon inflammation or sustained positions—such as wrist flexion in deep sleep—that increase the pressure in the carpal tunnel. Some patients say that occupational activities produce symptoms, while other patients notice that daily activities such as driving and holding the newspaper are aggravating. Women who are pregnant or have recently had a baby may experience these kinds of symptoms as well. Symptoms of carpal tunnel during the early phase usually come and go as the offending activity is

either modified or discontinued. However, constant numbness or weakness may be signs of more severe compression with potential damage to the nerve. If you experience symptoms that concern you, I recommend evaluation by your health care provider who can begin a treatment plan that includes further diagnostic workup.

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Organ Donor with Diabetes?

Q. If I have type 2 diabetes can I be an organ donor? What things would exclude me from being an organ donor?

A. Diabetes affects organs in different ways. It would be extremely unusual to be able to donate your pancreas since diabetes affects the ability of the pancreas to produce or secrete enough insulin. However, diabetes rarely affects your lungs or your liver, so you could almost certainly donate these organs. Diabetes frequently affects heart and kidney function over time. Your ability to donate these organs would be determined on a case-by-case basis. It would depend on organ function, degree of compliance with insulin therapy, age and biopsy results (especially with kidneys).

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Dental Implants?

Q. My mother has difficulty with her partial dentures. I have heard that dental implants are another option. What are the benefits of getting dental implants?

A. Dental implants would be a great option. Dental implants are titanium tooth root replacements that can be used to stabilize your mother's existing dentures or to replace the dentures altogether with teeth (crowns) that are permanently affixed to the jawbones. Implants are the closest you can get to having your natural teeth back. The bone in the jaws only exists to support the teeth. When a tooth is lost the bone starts being lost as well. So, it is important to get a missing tooth replaced sooner rather than later. Placement of an implant gives the jawbone something to support, preventing bone loss due to tooth loss. Over time, so much bone can be lost that bone grafting is required to replace the missing tooth with a dental implant. Bone grafts can come from your own living tissues or the tissues of donors. There are even totally synthetic bone grafting materials available today. The best thing to do about a missing tooth is to see your dentist or oral surgeon as soon as possible.

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