Parent Connection

Henry Ford Health System | Henry Ford Department of Pediatrics

September 21, 2021

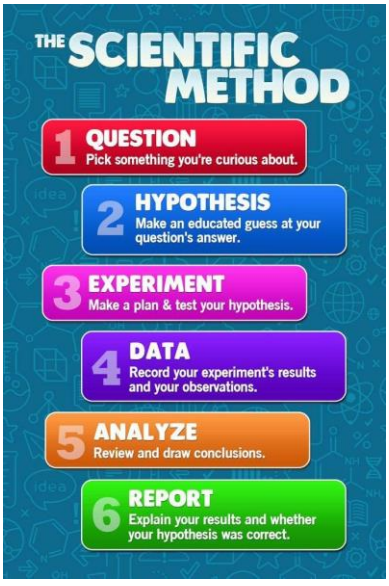
We know life may be challenging right now and we want you to know your Henry Ford pediatrician is still here for you. Below we have collected articles and resources we think you might find helpful. Information in our newsletters is yours to use when it is helpful to you and yours to disregard when it is not. We hope you and your family are staying safe during this pandemic.

Children and THC-Laced Edibles

As marijuana is legalized in more states, calls to poison centers have increased regarding child exposure to cannabis. About half of these calls have been about edibles. A pediatrician at Henry Ford, Dr. Leonard Pollak, recently spoke out about the dangers of THC-laced edibles. One of the biggest areas of concern is packaging of these products. Many are made to mimic popular candies and often are appealing to children. The American Academy of Pediatrics has advice on how to avoid pot poisoning. If your child eats marijuana by accident, call the free poison control hotline at 1 (800) 222-1222 as soon as possible for help. If symptoms seem severe, call 911 or go to an emergency room right away.

What is the Scientific Method?

During the pandemic, we have heard the phrase "scientific research" used many times. It can be hard to understand exactly what scientific research is and why it's important. The term scientific research can also be known as the scientific method, the same thing many of us learned in middle school science class. While the diagram here is simplified for people who aren't scientists, there are actually many steps to the scientific method. Scientists use it to help learn new things and gain understanding around a particular topic.



This research can be done over a long period and can change when new information is gathered. When we hear someone talk about scientific research it can be frustrating to constantly hear things changing. However, that is the whole point of having a system for research. It allows us to gain new evidence and better understand a certain area of science, for example COVID -19. One positive thing over the course of the pandemic is that we can witness the scientific method play out in real time. There are many fun ways to teach yourself and children about the scientific method at home. These three at home science experiments can be a fun way to witness science with everyday things you may already have at home. There are many easy science experiments that the whole family can do together to better understand how science works and changes.

Explaining Vaccines to Kids

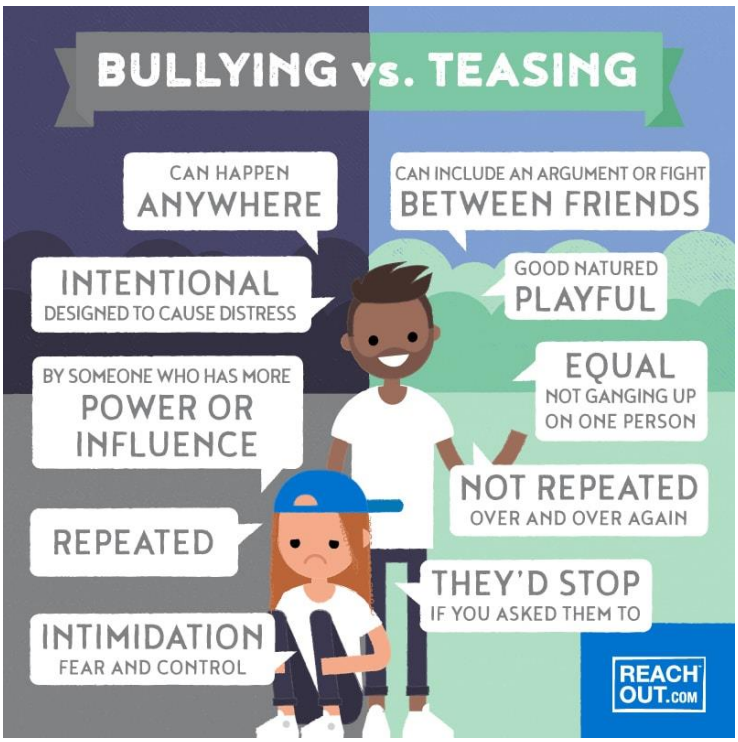
Vaccines are an important topic these days and can often be difficult to explain to children that may overhear the news or a conversation between adults. Starting the conversation early can help kids understand that there are many vaccines, not just the COVID-19 vaccine. Explaining the importance of vaccines and that they can protect children and people around them from serious diseases can also lead into conversations about kindness and empathy. A child can often be fearful of the pain associated with getting a shot. Explaining that the pain is temporary, and they are being protected from getting sick, can increase understanding. Educating yourself can also be helpful. Understanding exactly what a vaccine is can be beneficial so you are prepared for the questions children may have. These at home lessons and activities centered around vaccines can better educate the entire family on the benefits of vaccines.

Long Term Effects of Vaccines

There is a lot of talk about long term side effects of the COVID-19 vaccines. We do not have documented evidence of the 2- or 5-year effects of the COVID-19 vaccines. They are too new. But that doesn't mean they haven't been tested. Scientists around the world are confident in their safety. So how do we know they are safe? We have a long history of vaccine development and use. It has been more than 200 years since the smallpox vaccine was created. Since then, the science and technology of vaccines has evolved. Vaccines in use today use a variety of methods to create an immune response in the body. Regardless of the method, vaccines work by teaching the immune system about a disease or infection and then disappearing. Vaccines do not stay in the body, but the information the immune system learned from the vaccine is stored in "memory" cells called T-lymphocytes and B-lymphocytes. Most side effects from vaccines occur within the first six weeks of receiving an injection. However, most people don't have any serious side effects from vaccines.

Bullying vs. Teasing

With school back in session, some children will be coming home and telling stories of being teased. Sometimes it can be hard to tell if your child is being teased or bullied. Teasing can be positive or negative. Positive teasing can be used to strengthen relationships and can often be done in an affectionate way. Negative teasing, however, is hurtful and distressing to the person being teased. Negative teasing can quickly become bullying. The difference between teasing and bullying often comes down to intent. People bullying generally intend to cause harm, while teasing is usually not meant to cause harm. If you feel your child is being bullied, intervention may be needed. You can find a lot of resources at StopBullying.gov.



The Autumnal Equinox

September 22 is the Autumnal or Fall Equinox or the first day of Fall. This means that day and night are nearly equal in length on this day. This time is celebrated in many different ways across history and around the world. While there aren't any widely celebrated American traditions associated with the Autumnal Equinox, it does mark a shift in activities, food and even clothes. If you are looking for ways to mark the day, consider activities that focus on balance or the divide between opposites. Or check out some of these ideas. For other fall activities, check out some of these.

Are there other topics you are interested in and would like to learn more about? If yes, please e-mail us at ParentConnection@hfhs.org or to unsubscribe.