

MMPC Newsletter Spring/Summer 2006



Does my Child Need Allergy Testing?

Although allergy testing is commonly done, it is not necessary for the diagnosis. Most physicians can make a diagnosis by symptom evaluation and exam. Since most children will respond to over-the-counter or prescription anti-histamines, it is often unnecessary to put them through the stress of testing (as well as the cost).

There are certain scenarios in which testing will help guide treatment.

- 1) Multiple trials of allergy medications are ineffective.
- 2) Allergies are aggravating a second condition, such as asthma.
- 3) Patient is considering allergy shots (desensitization treatment) for symptom control.

There are two forms of testing. Blood can be drawn to evaluate for antibodies to certain allergens. An allergist can also do a skin prick test in which they deposit certain allergens within the upper skin layer and then monitor for redness at the site.

If you are concerned that your child needs testing, please schedule an appointment with the provider to discuss.

Summertime Safety

We encourage children to be active outdoors as much as possible. However, we ask that you remember some simple safety tips:

- Utilize sunscreen that is at least 15 spf.
- A helmet is a *must* for bike riding, skateboarding and rollerblading.
- If your child is not a trained swimmer, insist on a life vest. Do not count on arm floats alone.
- Wear long sleeves and pants when exploring in the woods to help avoid poison ivy, tick bites, etc.

Rainy Day Science Experiment

Quicksand

This cornstarch quicksand is an easy way to teach your kids about hydrosol, a compound in which a solid is scattered throughout a liquid. In a bowl combine 1 cup cornstarch with a 1/2 cup of water; stir with your fingers until it forms a thick paste. Punch the surface. Your fist will barely make a dent; when the compound is mixed, the process traps tiny drops of water between tiny bits of starch making the surface feel solid. Now slowly dip your hand into the paste. Pick it up and it will ooze through your fingers. Squeeze it, turning it over and over in your hands; watch how it goes from goopy liquid to dry powder and back to glop—when there is no pressure the mixture turns watery again.

First Aid

Bee Stings:

If stung by a bee, gently remove stinger by scraping skin with a credit card. Wash with soap/water. Apply ice and/or a paste of baking soda and water. Give acetaminophen (Tylenol) for pain. Go to ER for any trouble breathing or welt like rash on other areas of skin.

Sunburn:

Place wet, cold washcloths on burn. For larger areas, take a bath in cool water with baking soda. Apply a soothing lotion or aloe. Give acetaminophen or ibuprofen for pain. Seek medical care for large, painful blisters or fever.

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Quicksand recipe from Martha Stewart Kids Magazine