

Ulcers

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every day. Use a mirror to look at hard to see areas. Look for areas that stay red and do not turn white after a change of position, especially over bony areas. If you have dark skin, the area may simply become darker than normal.

Also look for blisters, sores, or sunken areas on your skin. A redness or change in the color of the skin that goes away after turning and changing position is normal. But if there is redness or a change in skin color that stays, this may be a pressure ulcer.

Keep your skin clean and free from perspiration, urine, stool, and wound drainage. Bathe in warm (not hot) water. Pat your skin dry and avoid rubbing it. Use a mild soap and apply moisturizer after bathing.

How do I care for pressure ulcers?

The most important part of care for pressure ulcers is a close daily examination of the body, especially focusing on the buttocks, heels, sacrum (tailbone), and hips. If a break in the skin is noted, treatment should begin immediately. On a daily basis note any change in drainage, redness, odor, or low-grade fever.

What if I have to stay in bed or am confined to a

wheelchair?

Avoid massaging bony parts of your body. Massage may injure the tissue below the skin. Reduce friction on your skin. Use your arms to lift yourself up instead of dragging yourself. If you use a hospital bed, ask about using a trapeze bar to lift your body when you position yourself in bed. Ask about using mattresses and cushions that may help to decrease pressure. Change your position at least every two hours. If you can't move on your own, a caregiver should help you. Keep a written time schedule for turning and positioning. Use pillows or soft pads to keep ankles and knees from touching each other.

When you are lying on your back, you can place pillows lengthwise under your legs from your calf to ankle to keep your heels off the bed. Don't put pillows under your knees when you are in the back-lying position. When you are lying on your side, avoid lying directly on your hip bone. A 30 degree side-lying position is best.

The head of the bed should be raised as little as possible, usually 30 degrees, except when you are eating or drinking. If you raise the bed too much, you will slide down. Check with your doctor or nurse when deciding how high the head of the bed should be.

If you are in a wheelchair or sit for long periods of time in a chair, ask about using a special seat cushion for reducing pressure, but do not use donut-shaped cushions. These can decrease blood flow to the skin. Reposition yourself every hour. If you can't do this by yourself, have your caregiver assist you.

Do small weight shifts and lifts in the chair every 15 minutes if you are able. Persons with incontinence need to take extra steps to limit moisture. Keep skin clean and dry. And finally, do remember to eat healthy, well-balanced meals and try to exercise daily.

■ *Rosol is program director for Atlantic General Hospital's Wound Care Center.*

How to make your kid smarter

By Dr. Victor Gong

Wouldn't it be great if we could mold our kids to be geniuses? We can't overcome genetics but we can manipulate the environment the children live in. How much stock should we put in those magical IQ tests?

People tend to take individual scores too seriously. A better indicator is if a child is curious, enjoys role-playing and learning, and is happy.

Eating smarter for better brain health begins in the womb and continues with breastfeeding, when mom follows the daily recommendations for vitamins and minerals. The real trick is teaching young children to like good food when they move from breast milk to whole foods. Teaching children to try everything, and then avoid foods they do not like for a year or so as



Dr. Victor Gong

taste develops, works fine.

Children thrive on five or six daily servings

of fruits and vegetables; five servings of whole grains; three servings of meat, fish or poultry; and two or three servings of milk. Smaller-than-adult size portions will keep children from gaining too much weight. As young children prefer salty and sweet tastes, mothers can "spice up" vegetables sparingly.

Children should take vitamin and mineral supplements at the prescribed doses. Research shows children taking the recommended daily allowance of vitamin and mineral supplements for three months learned 14 different academic subjects at twice the rate

of children given a placebo. In more than 1 million children given a good breakfast and lunch at school, academic performance improved by 16 percent.

The brain is a muscle, too. Build brain muscle by exercising it. To train young minds, read something every night. Stimulate your child's interest and curiosity and encourage the child to play an instrument.

The Mozart effect, in which listening to classical music will improve IQ scores, is overrated. Infants, toddlers and preschoolers who grow up in homes where talking, listening and reading are common tend to have higher IQ scores and greater success in school.

Spending time with your child in the first year can yield big dividends later both in terms of parent-child bonding and enhanced

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mental growth. Kids left alone to sit or watch TV or play video games on their own won't do as well. Encourage active learning and the exchange of ideas.

As they grow, children need time and freedom to play and explore. If your preschooler is playing in the mud or role-playing with you or a peer, he is learning what he needs to learn. Sports, music and other activities demand focused attention and discipline, and stimulate mental development. But don't force children to adopt your own interests. Just because Mom enjoyed tennis as a child doesn't guarantee that her own children will.

Each child's interest and learning strategies are unique. To develop

intelligence, we must not neglect ambition, courage and conscientiousness, which are equally important for success. We mustn't forget to teach children how to learn and have fun too.

As early environmental effects wear off, intelligence training should be a lifelong pursuit. Nourished by a healthy diet and encouraged to use their unique gifts most effectively, your child should be off to a running start. The best gift you can give a child is a love for learning and for satisfying work.

To learn more about these and other health topics visit www.75thstmedical.com.

Gong is medical director of 75th Street Medical and Doctors Weight Control and Wellness Center in Ocean City.

Foster parent honored; more sought

SNOW HILL — In celebration of Black History Month, the Worcester County Department of Social Services recently honored Worcester County foster parent Grace Brittingham of Pocomoke at her birthday luncheon at Hutt Memorial United Methodist Church in Snow Hill. The Worcester County DSS is in need of African-American foster/adoptive parents and Brittingham is an African-American foster/adoptive parent who has 10 years of service. Family, friends and Worcester County public officials gathered to honor Brittingham and to celebrate her 69th birthday.

Brittingham adopted the first foster child she received into care. Her adopted daughter, Wynesha Brittingham, is now 12 years old. Recently, Grace began caring for another child, whose adoptive parent has been deployed overseas. The parent contacted Grace, who had been the child's previous foster parent, to see if



Megan Raymond photo

From left, Mary Rouse Grace Brittingham and her daughter Sandy Bell, sit at the head table as Grace is being introduced at the luncheon.

she would again parent her while he was away; Brittingham agreed.

For further information about becoming a foster/adoptive parent, call the Worcester County Department of Social Services at

1-866-WOR-CHILD and register to attend the upcoming foster care information meeting on March 23 from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. at the One Stop Location on 424 Market St. in Snow Hill.